



Cicero in Heaven

THE ROMAN RHETOR AND
LUTHER'S REFORMATION

Carl P.E. Springer

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The Roman Rhetor and Luther's Reformation

By

Carl P.E. Springer



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Preface

This book has been long in the making. Parts of it, in various stages of completion, have been presented at gatherings of the International Society of Neo-Latin Studies (2012), the Renaissance Society of America (2013), the Classical Association of the Midwest and South (2013 and 2015), the Kentucky Foreign Language Conference (2014), the International Society for the History of Classical Rhetoric (2015), the European Studies Conference (2015),¹ the Society of Classical Studies (2016), the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference (2016), and the Modern Language Association (2017). To those in attendance, I express my gratitude for their attention, criticisms, and helpful suggestions. The section of the fourth chapter dealing with Bach as a Latin teacher is an abbreviated version of a presentation given at “Lutheranism and the Classics II,” a conference held at Concordia Theological Seminary in Fort Wayne in 2012, in whose proceedings it has now been published.² Throughout the book I have drawn extensively on entries that I originally wrote for *Brill’s Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World*.³ Some of the same observations on Luther’s views on *tentatio* and theological education that I make in the second and third chapters are expanded in an essay on the subject, “The Uses of *Tentatio*: Satan, Luther, and Theological Maturation,” which will appear in a volume entitled *The Hermeneutics of Hell: Visions and Representations of the Devil in World Literature*.

For support provided by the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and the SunTrust Chair of Excellence in the Humanities which I currently occupy, I am most grateful. I am especially appreciative of those fellow scholars who have listened to my ideas, made suggestions, and encouraged me along the way. These include Joel Brondos, Christopher Craig, Luka Ilić, Christian Kopff, Thomas Korcok, Neil Leroux, Oliver Olson, Andrew Pettegree, Alden Smith, Kirk Summers, Terence Tunberg, and Timothy Wengert. The final section of the last chapter owes much to conversations with the late John Shields in the years prior to the publication of *The American Aeneas*. Joshua Davies, Robert Kolb, and Andrew Weeks read initial drafts of this book and made invaluable corrections, saving me from a host of errors of fact and infelicities of style. The

1 My paper, “To Forget Latin: Reflections on the Fading of a European Sign,” was included in the proceedings of this conference. Portions of the fourth chapter of this book, as well as the first pages of the “Epilogue,” include the same or similar material.

2 “Bach’s Latin,” *AFW*, 293–307.

3 “The Reformation,” “Calvin,” “Erasmus—the Theological Writings,” “Luther,” “Lutheran Education,” and “Melancthon” (*BENLW*, 747–58; 939–40; 975–6; 1040–3; 1046–7).

staff at Concordia Seminary Library in St. Louis and the Concordia Historical Institute have been most accommodating. Austin Gibson deserves special mention for serving so ably as my research assistant at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville. I also owe a debt of thanks to my students Reid Elsea and Daniel Andrews for their editorial assistance.

Let me offer to the reader a preliminary personal observation that may shed light on my motivation for writing this book. This seems especially apropos in view of the distinctively postmodern notion of Karen Halttunen, namely, that of “the barefoot historian.” With this term she hopes to capture “one important creative response to the late twentieth-century critique of the omniscient narrator of professional historical convention.” In an attempt to avoid “the appearance of a dispassionate approach, uncontaminated by partiality or interest, unconstrained by the limitations of a single vantage point,” Halttunen suggests that scholars “acknowledge openly their personal connections with their subject, joining the barefoot historian in asserting that they are in some way native to it.”⁴

Pursuant to calls such as these for a sort of transparent “presuppositionalism,” if you will, and also in consideration of how many of the following pages will be devoted to the use of Cicero in the classroom, this book is dedicated to the memory of the instructors who labored to instruct the author in the fundamentals of the Latin language and introduced me to the major classical Latin authors, including Cicero. This process began for me when I was a freshman in high school and continued four years later at Northwestern College, a small institution of higher learning in Watertown, Wisconsin, whose aim it was to provide students (all male) with a liberal arts foundation that would prepare them for post-graduate theological study at Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Seminary. In the 1970s when I attended Northwestern College, its curriculum was still focused on the study of ancient languages and literatures—not so very different from a traditional German *Gymnasium* of the nineteenth century. Indeed, pupils in the preparatory high school attached to the college were still referred to using the old Latin designations for grade levels: *Sextaner*, *Quintaner*, *Quartaner*, and *Tertianer*. Before entering the College, all freshmen were expected to have had four years of high school Latin, including a year of Cicero.⁵ In the first year of college Latin, we read Horace, Livy, and Terence. Electives in later years included Plautus and Tacitus; only one class was

4 Halttunen, “Barefoot Historian,” 20–24.

5 The 1973–4 course catalog of Northwestern College lists under the category of “Intermediate Latin”: “Brief grammar review. Cicero: two orations in the original. Prerequisite: Latin 40 (02), or equivalent (5 hours, 1 semester).” This course was intended presumably for those students

devoted to ecclesiastical Latin. In Greek classes, we read such pagan authors as Plato, Aristophanes, Sophocles, Homer, and Menander. (There were only two semesters of New Testament Greek.) There was a required mathematics course and a science course, but by far the majority of the coursework was in language, literature, and history.⁶

Why was it, I ask myself now in retrospect, that such a curriculum, so focused on the languages, literature, and history of the ancient Greco-Roman pagans, should have been deemed indispensable for those preparing to study Lutheran theology? And, why, of all the Latin prose authors, should Cicero have been assigned to me, propaedeutically, to read as a junior in high school, as, indeed, he was to so many other seventeen-year-olds across America at the time? And why the Catilinarian orations for much of that year? The answers to such questions were self-evident, it seems, not only to Lutheran pedagogues of the day, but also to professional classicists such as Charles Jenney and Rogers Scudder, the editors of *Third Year Latin*, my dog-eared high school textbook, who found it unnecessary to account for Cicero's prominent place therein:

Making Cicero the foundation of the third-year course requires little comment, for Latin without Cicero is like English without Shakespeare. Cicero's writings and orations constitute a large proportion of classical Latin literature, and his mastery of style has made him the pre-eminent teacher of later generations.⁷

It is the author's hope that any insights gleaned from the following pages may resonate not only with others who underwent the same kind of educational training as he, but also, more generally, with all readers who are interested in understanding more clearly Cicero's import for Martin Luther and his followers, and in gaining a deeper appreciation of the long-lasting effects Luther and Lutherans had on Cicero's legacy not only in Europe but also in America.

who had entered the College without four years of high school Latin. My thanks to Michael Albrecht for providing me with this information.

6 All students were required to take courses devoted to ancient Mediterranean history and Roman history. Required, too, was a semester of Shakespeare as well as a semester of Milton. German coursework included the study not only of the German Bible (Luther's translation), but also works by Lessing, Goethe, Schiller, and Nietzsche. All students took two years of Biblical Hebrew.

7 Jenney and Scudder, *Third Year Latin*, v.

Prolegomena

Cicero was not a Christian and most certainly not a Lutheran (he died a number of decades before the birth of Christ and over fifteen hundred years before Luther's birth in 1483), but more than once Martin Luther expressed his fervent wish that God might be able to show his favorite Latin prose author some sort of consideration in the life to come. In 1538, in one of his "Table Talks" (*Tischreden*), it is recorded that he spoke to friends and family gathered around him of Cicero, "the best, wisest, and most hard working man, and of how much he suffered and accomplished":

I hope, he said, that our Lord God will also be gracious to him and those like him, even though it is not up to us to say and determine this. We should rather stick with the revealed word: "Whoever believes and is baptized, etc." But that God is unable to make judgments regarding different people and to make distinctions among them, here we cannot know; he has his times and his means. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, much more complete and extensive. He is perfectly capable of giving individuals what they deserve for what they have done (WATR 4,14).⁸

Whether there might be some sort of consideration not only for Cicero but also for other virtuous pagans in the world to come was a question that troubled Luther and many others in premodern Europe.⁹ The *aporia* did not lend itself to a simple solution. On the one hand, biblical passages such as John 3: 5 and 3: 18 seem to make it quite clear that baptism and faith in the Son of God are prerequisites for eternal salvation. But the epistle to the Hebrews suggests that Old Testament figures like Enoch had faith (Heb. 11: 5) and were able "to please God" even though they were born long before Christ's advent. If, in the course of his "harrowing of hell," Jesus preached to the "spirits in prison" (1 Pet. 3: 19), giving them a chance to be incorporated in the plan of salvation retroactively, were there only biblical figures in the number of those he triumphantly rescued (as he "led captivity captive"; Eph. 4: 8), or might virtuous pagans have been included too? These latter would almost certainly have been quite unaware of the biblical God, but many (like Cicero) did seem to believe in some sort of divine being and might be credited with the possession of a partial faith. After all, Old Testament believers themselves could hardly have

8 See WA 39.1,75 for a similar acquiescence on Luther's part to God's will in this regard.

9 See, e.g., Augustine, *Ep.* 164.4.

had a full understanding of God's triune nature. Was it really fair that those pagans born in a pre-Christian era should never have had a chance to accept (or reject) the Christian Gospel?

Dante's creative solution to this conundrum is well known. The Roman poet Virgil, whose fourth *Eclogue* was considered in the Middle Ages to be as valid a prophecy of the Messiah as Isaiah's, and who served as Dante's guide in Hell and Purgatory, inhabits a special place in the next world, Limbo. Here there is no weeping or torment as elsewhere in Dante's *Inferno*, but only sighs from those who through no fault of their own were never baptized. These are great spirits with "slow, serious eyes," speaking "rarely and with sweet voices" (*Inferno* 4.112–47). Near what Dante calls "a noble castle," surrounded by a pretty stream on a meadow of green grass, the poet espies a group of philosophers of whom the first mentioned is Aristotle, "the master of them who know." Included in this distinguished company is Cicero (*Tulio*), named right after the great musician and prophet, Orpheus, and just before Linus, the music teacher of Hercules.¹⁰

Luther does not enter into any of these imponderables or suggest any imaginative solutions of his own. After all, neither Limbo nor Purgatory find any mention in the Old or New Testaments, and so Luther, the biblical theologian, simply leaves the entire matter in God's hands. All the same, he continued to express concern about Cicero's ultimate fate until the end of his life. As late as 1544 (Luther died in 1546) we find him still hoping that Cicero would fare better in the next life than Duke George, the ruler of Albertine Saxony and a staunch opponent of the Reformation (WATR 5,311). Elsewhere he gives Cicero better odds for less rough treatment in the afterlife than Caiaphas, the high priest who conducted the trial of Jesus, and hopes that he will occupy "a higher station" in the world to come than the Archbishop of Mainz.¹¹

How did it come about that this pagan Roman master of Latin eloquence could make such a favorable impression so many centuries later on a biblical theologian who believed that eternal salvation was dependent upon faith in Jesus Christ alone and who is often referred to as "the father of the German

10 This discussion draws on my review of von Moos and Roelli, *Heiden im Himmel*, 1438–9. I use Durling's edition of *The Divine Comedy*, 76.

11 "Varro and Cicero are the best. According to Varro, there are three categories of gods: the poetic, the philosophical, and the natural. Cicero understands very well that there is only one god, but he does not see what that god is. I also believe that they will be flogged less severely in the final judgment. For I do not hold that Cicero should be so harshly condemned as Caiaphas" (WA 48,702). Luther also expressed his hope that Cicero would receive "remission of sins" and at the very least occupy "a higher station" than "our cardinals" and the Archbishop of Mainz (WATR 3,698).

language?" What exactly was Luther's attitude towards the famous Roman rhetor? Why was Cicero so highly regarded by Luther's colleagues at the University of Wittenberg (especially Philipp Melanchthon) and adherents of the Lutheran Reformation elsewhere? How did he come to occupy such a prominent place in the curricula of Lutheran schools and universities for years to come? How significant was the influence of Cicero and his rhetorical theory and practice in the Lutheran centuries that were to follow? What sort of impact did the Reformation's warm embrace of Cicero have on subsequent generations of Lutherans, classicists, and others? These are some of the questions that will occupy us in the following pages.

Sweeping diachronic studies like this one, whose perspectives are informed by the *longue durée*, work best when their topic's parameters are fairly restricted.¹² This is especially true in dealing with questions of reception. It is difficult for general studies on Cicero's influence such as John Rolfe's delightful but dated *Cicero and His Influence*, or Bruno Weil's wonderfully idiosyncratic *2000 Jahre Cicero*, or more recently, George Kennedy's magisterial overview, "Cicero's Oratorical and Rhetorical Legacy" in *Brill's Companion to Cicero*, to do full justice to the particular, if they are to serve adequately the needs of the generalist. Alternatively, there are valuable specialist studies, like those collected in *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Cicero*, or *Cicero Refused to Die*, which, quite understandably, do not stray far outside tightly drawn chronological or thematic boundary lines. This is a book about the very long and rich legacy of that ancient wordsmith, Cicero, as viewed through the eyes of Martin Luther and the ecclesiastical movement associated with his name, which also has a rich, albeit shorter, legacy. Both Cicero and Luther are names that continue to be filled with deep significance for many to the present day, and this study aims to be far reaching in its scope, covering topics as distant from each other as Demosthenes and American presidential rhetoric, but without ever losing complete sight of its specific focus.

As daunting as such an approach to cultural history can be, the long trek through the European (and American) centuries is well worth the effort, as Tadeusz Zielinski observes in his classic study, *Cicero im Wandel der Jahrhunderte*, written, at least in part, to rebut the attacks against Cicero delivered by the preeminent German historian, Theodor Mommsen in his *Römische Geschichte*:

Anyone who has had the pleasure of travelling along one of those great roads which have long been among the chief highways of the human

12 On the value (for the historian) of the *longue durée*, as opposed to "the appeal to immediate causal factors," see Cameron, *Mediterranean World*, 210.

race—the roads which run northwards and westwards from the plain of Lombardy through the Alps—will always remember his experiences. He has felt the very pulse-beat of world history. All the ages have left their memories behind them: here a Roman watch-tower built for the wars of Marcus Aurelius, there a knightly castle recalling a Hohenstaufen's visit to the strange land across the mountains; this gorge speaks of Hannibal, this dam of Napoleon, this bridge of Suvorov; that lake was ennobled by an epigram of Catullus, yonder valley by a *terzina* of Dante, this view by a page in Goethe's diary; on this rock, like a strayed bird, the memory of Tristan and Isolde with their grievous love once alighted. Every reader of Cicero will have a similar experience, if he has a sense of history; and that experience alone is enough—even if the caricaturists are right in all they say—to give him thoughts and feelings of incomparable depth. This phrase of Cicero's was locked by Jerome in his heart, in spite of his dream vow; with that, Diderot endeavoured to destroy the "superstition" of posterity. That thought charmed Petrarch; by this, in the midst of tormenting doubts, the mind of Luther was "much and deeply moved." Here is the pearl that Bossuet set in the gold of his style; there the steel out of which a Jacobin forged his dagger. This sentence won a delicate worldly laugh from the pretty admirers of the patriarch of Ferney; and that moved the terrorized judges of Louis XVI to tears. It is a unique and unforgettable pleasure; but one must not be afraid of the effort it takes, for it cannot be denied that it is easier to walk over certain other paths than to travel the Roman road.¹³

The first chapter of this particular "Roman road" begins with a discussion of the signal contributions Cicero made to Latin rhetoric and prose style in the first place and proceeds to consider how his theory and practice came to influence Christian Latin authors in late antiquity and the Middle Ages. In this chapter we also explore the importance of the recovery of classical Latin in general, and Cicero's Latinity in particular, for Renaissance humanists and for the "magisterial" Reformation. The next chapter considers the aspects of Cicero's rhetoric which were particularly appreciated by Martin Luther; the German reformer's attitude towards the Roman rhetor is complex and will need to be parsed carefully. Even if Luther's distinctive prose is itself not exactly "Ciceronian," there is still much about Cicero's eloquence and wisdom

13 As quoted in translation by Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 555. Zielinski dreamed "of a scientific synthesis of antiquity and Christianity that reconciled German *Altertumswissenschaft* with Slavic messianism" (Ayer, "Central-Eastern Europe," 151).

and life that he respected enormously. Certainly, too, it is unlikely that without Luther's enthusiastic endorsement Cicero would have played as important a role in subsequent Lutheran education as he did. The educational uses to which Cicero was put by Luther and his colleague, Melanchthon, at the University of Wittenberg and other educational institutions are the subject of the third chapter, as we consider how Cicero came to occupy such a prominent place in the new system of education established by the Lutheran reformers. The fourth chapter considers Cicero's continued importance in schools and universities in Europe, thanks not only to the long-lived educational programs established in the Reformation but also the Cicero-rich curriculum of the Jesuits' *Ratio studiorum*. Here we also touch on aspects of Cicero's influence in the generations that followed, paying specific attention to the example of Johann Sebastian Bach, who was a Latin teacher as well as a musician and composer. We shall also consider the question of how Cicero's legacy was continued in the Americas, with special emphasis on education in general and Lutheran education in particular. The final chapter takes up the question of indifference and hostility to Latin, the classics, and Cicero, beginning already in Reformation circles (with Luther himself), the rapid rise in status of the vernacular languages in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the development of an "anti-Ciceronian" movement in the second half of the sixteenth century. The chapter goes on to explore the eventual diminution of Cicero's stature, beginning markedly in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth,¹⁴ a circumstance that attended the rise of Romanticism and philhellenism in Germany and elsewhere in Europe, and the gradual attenuation of whatever influence Cicero once had on American culture.

If continuities and commonalities are featured as prominently in the following pages as their counterparts, ruptures and distinctions, the reader should not assume thereby that the author is unaware or even dismissive of the discontinuities and lack of commonalities that have been so often discovered between such familiar historical constructs as "paganism" and "Christianity," "classical" and "medieval," "Renaissance" and "Reformation," etc.¹⁵ Distinctions are necessary, and they will be made in the pages that follow, all in due course, as the need for clarification or contextualization becomes apparent; they should not add unduly to the length of the book or distract attention away from its singular focus. But while such distinctions have proved to be

14 This period has been called (by Reinhart Kosellek) the "saddle period" between premodernity and modernity in Germany (Leonhardt, *Latin*, 184).

15 Bouwsma, "Renaissance and Reformation," explores the "affinities" and "connections" between these last two historical phenomena.

exceedingly useful for the purposes of clear teaching, developing specific areas of scholarly expertise, and even defining academic sub-disciplines, they have virtually guaranteed that the kinds of overarching questions posed in this book are seldom asked, either by classicists (even those who specialize in Cicero and the Ciceronian tradition), or theologians and church historians who devote themselves to the study of Luther and the Reformation. Rather than simply contributing to even more refined differentiations, therefore, this book aims to demonstrate the value of intellectual “clumping” (as opposed to “splitting”). As seen from this perspective, the most important word in the binary phraseology so often used to describe this particular dynamic relationship, “paganism and Christianity” (or in German, *Antike und Christentum*), may very well be the copula.¹⁶ There is a complicated relationship between the two concepts that is not as purely antithetical as is often supposed.

In classical rhetorical theory, similarly, words (*verba*) and the things or ideas that they signify (*res*) are different, but they are never for us really entirely separate from each other, any more than the person of the orator can ever be removed from what he says.¹⁷ After all, the best speaker or writer must not only be skilled in the use of words but also has to be “a good man” (*vir bonus*), if what he says is to be taken seriously by his audience. Cicero’s achievements as a rhetorician and orator cannot be easily considered apart from his biographical accomplishments and failures, as a philosopher and a politician and a man, who thought, spoke, wrote, and lived (106–43 BC) during a most violent, revolutionary, and dangerous time. He exerted his will by dint of his eloquence, and he died for what he believed and because of how he said it.

Of a study such as this it is a fair question, indeed, to ask which Cicero we are talking about. The orator and statesman, the philosopher, the rhetorical theorist, the tragic hero of the Roman Republic? Cicero’s name proved to be so magnetic over the centuries that to it were attributed more than one work that he did not author. There is a veritable host of “Ciceros.” Certainly the interest in discovering the uniqueness and particularity of different aspects of a biography’s subject like Cicero is understandable, but there must also be a unitary, general object that lies behind and encompasses all of the particularized

16 The Franz Joseph Dölger-Institut zur Erforschung der Spätantike in Bonn, for example, has been producing for many years an encyclopedia devoted to the subject, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum*, as well as an annual journal, *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*.

17 The words *rhetor* and *orator* can be used virtually interchangeably, as they are by Luther, to mean a public speaker. If there is a distinction to be drawn between the two, one could say that the Greek word often includes the idea of rhetorical instruction, while the Latin word puts the emphasis mainly on the speech activity proper.

refinements in our mind, because otherwise we could not speak at all of a “Cicero,” even with quotation marks surrounding the word in question. It is difficult to disagree with John O. Ward’s conclusion that of “all these Ciceros,” it was the “Cicero of the art of speaking” who was the most influential of them all.¹⁸ Above all, Cicero was a man of words—words that were never divorced from things.¹⁹

If there are many “Ciceros” onto whom successive generations have projected their own desires, fears, and literary tastes, there are no doubt just as many “Luthers” and “Reformations.” The German reformer’s strongly expressed views on any number of subjects, including Cicero, could vary widely depending on audience and editors, and his own mood, health, and age. What an infinite variety of identities have been attributed to their eponymous “ancestor” by millions of Lutherans (to say nothing of others, not all of them in Europe, by any means), over the course of the half millennium that has passed since the 95 Theses were first composed! We shall be interested here primarily in the initial manifestations of the Lutheran Reformation in the first half of the sixteenth century, but we shall consider later developments as well, especially where Luther’s direct and indirect influence may be most clearly discerned. Much of the emphasis in the following pages will focus, geographically speaking, on western Europe, particularly Germany, but by including a consideration of the impact of the Reformation and Cicero on the Americas, especially the United States, it is hoped that this study may also be able to make a small contribution to the burgeoning field of “Atlantic Studies.”²⁰

18 Ward, “Ciceronian Rhetoric,” 163.

19 A note on the meaning of the adjective “Ciceronian” may be in order here. The word can refer to the strictly imitative prose style associated with Pietro Bembo and others in the Italian Renaissance or, more generously, to any degree of devotion, however slight, to the thought and writings of the ancient Roman rhetor. The noun derived from the adjective, “Ciceronianism,” has come to be almost a metonym for such general concepts as “boring, pompous eloquence” or even “Republicanism,” whether or not these associations with Cicero’s actual literary style, rhetorical doctrines, or philosophical tenets are justified or not. From our perspective, “Ciceronianism” and “anti-Ciceronianism” are not necessarily as diametrically opposed to each other as their names suggest. In fact, the rise of the latter may be seen as an indication of just how powerful a force Cicero’s Latin style continued to be in the second half of the sixteenth century, not simply a sign of his waning cultural significance. “Anti-Ciceronianism” would be inconceivable were there no Cicero and “Ciceronianism” to begin with.

20 “Atlantic Studies” should now be considered “an identifiable epistemological domain,” according to Boelhower, “New Atlantic Studies Matrix,” 83–101.

This is a book that is in large part about language in general and one language (Latin) in particular. Even though Latin was no longer being commonly spoken as a first language in early modern Europe, it was the *lingua franca* of the age. As a result, its study was still regarded as practical and its active use promoted in a way that those few who continue to teach and study Latin in this century can only with difficulty appreciate. Most often, Latin instruction today concentrates on learning to read the ancient language only.²¹ It is far less easy for modern students to appreciate the effect of the deliberate rhythmical patterns of formal Latin discourse than it would have been for the original Roman audiences. This will put us at a certain disadvantage as we try to understand from our present remove the lively impact of Cicero and his Latin prose on the Lutheran Reformation, especially if we are inclined to attribute to the vernacular languages and literatures a kind of spontaneous creative vitality that we assume must be artificially forced in Neo-Latin, or altogether lacking.

As Jürgen Leonhardt and others have shown, “repristinization”²² occurs frequently in the afterlife of historical languages like classical Latin, Attic Greek, or Sanskrit. The attempt to breathe new life into such languages is actually a common feature of their histories.²³ Latin was a “dead” (or, better perhaps, “fixed”) language not only in Emperor Charles V’s time but also in Charlemagne’s, one that had to be learned artificially, in schools and not at one’s mother’s knees.²⁴ The challenging assignment to which the humanists of the early modern period set themselves with great zeal was to revive as fully as possible the use of this ancient language one more time. That this may not be seen as an urgent goal for very many today is no reason to assume that the cultivation of Ciceroian Latin was not of as paramount importance in the sixteenth century as its advocates claimed it to be.

That considerations of language, especially the Latin language, have not traditionally interested modern scholars of the Reformation as much as they did

21 This may be changing. In America, the textbook of Minkova and Tunberg, *Latin for the New Millennium*, features oral-aural exercises. The National Latin Exam’s *Forum Romanum* is entirely in Latin. There is also a society for *Latinitas viva*, with the name *Salvi (Septentrionale Americanum Latinitatis Vivae Institutum)*, the “North American Institute of Living Latin Studies.”

22 According to Leonhardt (*Latin*, 29), the word “repristinization” was coined by the classicist Albrecht Dihle. The term “represtation” has often been associated with Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg and Neo-Lutheran theology.

23 On the development of ancient Greek as a “historical language,” a gradual decoupling of “the high form of the language from the everyday vernacular,” see Leonhardt, *Latin*, 29.

24 For the preferential use of the adjective “fixed” instead of “dead” in application to Latin, see Leonhardt, *Latin*, 19.

many of the reformers themselves is telling. Whether written by historians or theologians, far too much scholarship on the Reformation appears to regard language as little more than a form ready to be filled with content, as opposed to a constitutive force in its own right. Furthermore, if there is a language that has occupied the attention of Luther scholars, it has tended to be German. After all, the Reformation is precisely the period when the German language began to take on increased importance and assume many of its present characteristics, thanks in large part to Luther.

Compounding the problem is the fact that Latin was very much taken for granted generation after generation by those who inherited and less than thoughtfully embraced the traditional curriculum fashioned long ago by ecclesiastical leaders whose authority was not necessarily questioned by their epigones. Indeed, it could be said that one positive benefit of Latin's virtual disappearance from so many curricula everywhere at the present time is that there may now be sufficient scholarly "distance" to permit diachronic perspectives to be applied to the study of the Latin language in general and Cicero in particular.

In view of this book's unflagging attention to issues of language, it would be rather unsatisfying for readers, one suspects, to be presented with lengthy discussions of topics like "Ciceronian style" or "Luther's rhetoric" without the benefit of actual examples of the same made available for them to consult first-hand. It has been said of Luther that his language is so distinctive and effective that "one is tempted simply to quote him."²⁵ The same could be said of Cicero. Representative passages appear frequently in the following pages, therefore, although in the interest of conserving space these are most often presented in the form of translations only.²⁶

It would be foolhardy for anyone to claim to have consulted all of the secondary sources that might be of possible relevance to a study that ranges as widely as this one does. The amount of scholarly writing devoted to Cicero, the most significant and influential of all of the ancient Roman prose authors (Kathy Eden calls him "antiquity's larger-than-life literary *paterfamilias*"), and his reception through the centuries, is simply staggering, even if one concentrates

25 Joseph Lortz, as quoted in Maxfield, *Luther's Lectures*, 5.

26 Wherever possible, I have consulted existing English translations (e.g., the Loeb Classical Library; *Luther's Works*; Ewald Plass, *What Luther Says*) and in some instances have allowed my own to be guided by these. This said, unless otherwise indicated all translations are my own. For readers interested in comparing my translations with the original Latin (or German), I have provided abbreviated references to the sources used, either in the text itself or in footnotes.

only on his rhetorical significance.²⁷ William Altman alludes to the conclusion of the Gospel of John (21: 25) to express the extent of the problem: “not all of the books in the world could contain the full story of Cicero’s influence.”²⁸ The studious attention devoted by scholars over the years to the Reformation, too, has resulted in an enormous body of writing. In the pages that follow, we shall focus our attention more on Luther than on his fellow reformers, but that does little to make the bibliographic task easier since more has probably been written about this one churchman than any other figure in the history of Christianity except for its eponymous founder.²⁹ This said, curious readers will find in the notes abundant, if not always exhaustive, references to relevant scholarly work that should provide them ample opportunity to pursue questions in greater depth as desired.

With all of these purposes, parameters, and provisos in mind, it is the author’s hope that an interdisciplinary study of this sort will be able to shed some welcome fresh light on a topic of wide and deep significance. It should prove stimulating to specialized “archaeologists of knowledge,” including those who are (or are preparing to be) professional classicists, especially if they are interested in questions related to the reception of Cicero. It is meant also for church historians and theologians who have an interest in Luther and the Reformation and the history of Lutheranism, to say nothing of intellectual and cultural historians and historians of education and rhetoric.³⁰ Above all, however, the book is intended to appeal to any reader who is fascinated by the complex interrelationship between the classics and Christianity, often summarized in the form of a rhetorical question first posed by Tertullian, a North African Christian of the second century and himself no mean rhetorician: “What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?”³¹—or, as we might also ask here: “What does Athens have to do with Wittenberg?”

27 Eden, “Cicero’s Portion,” 39.

28 Altman, “Introduction,” 1.

29 Pelikan, *Melody of Theology*, 154.

30 The latter field has recently grown to be much more respected as a serious scholarly discipline than it was in the nineteenth century, when Thomas de Quincey (“Rhetoric,” 34) could declare that “the age of rhetoric like that of chivalry has passed amongst forgotten things.”

31 *De praescriptione haereticorum* 7.9 (CCSL 1,192).

List of Abbreviations

AFW	<i>Ad Fontes Witebergenses</i> . Edd. James A. Kellerman, Carl P.E. Springer. Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2014.
AJP	<i>American Journal of Philology</i> .
BCC	<i>Brill's Companion to Cicero: Oratory and Rhetoric</i> . Ed. James M. May. Leiden/Boston/Köln: Brill, 2002.
BCRC	<i>Brill's Companion to the Reception of Cicero</i> . Ed. William H.F. Altman. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2015.
BENLW	<i>Brill's Encyclopaedia of the Neo-Latin World</i> . Edd. Philip Ford, Jan Bloemendal, Charles Fantazzi. Leiden: Brill, 2014.
BUP	Baylor University Press.
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina. Turnhout: Brepols, 1954-.
CCT	<i>A Companion to the Classical Tradition</i> . Ed. Craig W. Kallendorf. Malden/Oxford/Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.
CHIQ	<i>Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly</i> .
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i> .
CPH	Concordia Publishing House.
CP	<i>Classical Philology</i> .
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i> .
CR	Corpus Reformatorum. Halle: Schwetske, 1834ff.
CRTD	<i>Cicero Refused to Die: Ciceronian Influence through the Centuries</i> . Ed. Nancy van Deusen. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013.
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum. Wien: C. Gerold, 1866-.
CUP	Cambridge University Press.
CW	<i>Classical World</i> .
CWE	Collected Works of Erasmus. Toronto: UTP, 1974-.
DUP	Duke University Press.
HL	<i>Humanistica Lovaniensia</i> .
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i> .
HUP	Harvard University Press.
ICS	<i>Illinois Classical Studies</i> .
IJCT	<i>International Journal of the Classical Tradition</i> .
ISI	Intercollegiate Studies Institute.
JHI	<i>Journal of the History of Ideas</i> .
JHUP	Johns Hopkins University Press.
LCL	Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: HUP, 1911-.
LQ	<i>Lutheran Quarterly</i> .
LW	Luther's Works. American Edition. Edd. Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut Lehmann. St. Louis: CPH, 1957-.

OCT	Oxford Classical Texts. Oxford: OUP.
OHNL	<i>The Oxford Handbook of Neo-Latin</i> . Edd. Sarah Knight, Stephan Tilg. Oxford: OUP, 2015.
OSUP	The Ohio State University Press.
OUP	Oxford University Press.
PL	Patrologia Latina. Ed. Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris, 1841–55.
PUP	Princeton University Press.
RE	<i>Renaissance Eloquence: Studies in the Theory and Practice of Renaissance Rhetoric</i> . Ed. James J. Murphy. Berkeley/Los Angeles: UCALP, 1983.
RQ	<i>Renaissance Quarterly</i> .
SUP	Stanford University Press.
TAPA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i> .
Teubner	Bibliotheca Teubneriana.
UCP	University of Chicago Press.
UCALP	University of California Press.
UMP	University of Michigan Press.
UNCP	University of North Carolina Press.
UPP	University of Pennsylvania Press.
UTP	University of Toronto Press.
VC	<i>Vigiliae Christianae</i> .
WA	<i>D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe</i> . Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–.
WATR	<i>D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Tischreden</i> . Weimar: Böhlau, 1912–21.
WAB	<i>D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Briefwechsel</i> . Weimar: Böhlau, 1930–78.
YUP	Yale University Press. Translations from the Bible are from The Authorized King James Version.

Cicero and Christian Latin Eloquence

This chapter serves primarily to set the stage for those that are to follow. In it the reader is introduced to the variety of rhetoric associated with the name of Cicero, as we consider his contributions to the development of Christian Latin prose style in late antiquity, his reputation and use in the Middle Ages, and the astonishing revival of interest in Cicero and Ciceronianism during the early modern period among humanists and reformers of the church alike. There is a very long list of Christian authors prior to Luther who were not only interested in Cicero as a moral and political philosopher, but also indebted, directly or indirectly, to the Roman's rhetorical theory and practice.

That Cicero should have made any contribution at all in this regard was not simply inevitable. Indeed, for diachronic studies such as these to be successful, we must do our best to avoid the illusions fostered by what the philosopher Henri Bergson termed “retrospective determinism.”¹ In fact, there is a strong, historic tendency within Christianity to oppose the kind of careful, trained eloquence associated with Cicero's name. In 1 Corinthians 2: 1–5, for example, the Apostle Paul declares to his Corinthian congregation that he did not come to them preaching the Gospel “with excellency of speech or of wisdom.” To judge from his own words, Paul may have cut less than an impressive oratorical appearance in Corinth and other cosmopolitan centers of Greco-Roman civilization as he delivered his evangelical message to potential converts “in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling.” But, as it turned out, this apparently poor rhetorical showing on the apostle's part was ultimately to serve a quite positive purpose, namely, the “demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” so that the Corinthians' faith “should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.”

The idea that highly refined eloquence is not necessary (and possibly detrimental) in matters of faith finds plenty of precedent in the Old Testament. When Yahweh calls upon Moses to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 4: 10–17), the erstwhile prince of Egypt declares with insistent modesty that he is not at all eloquent, but “slow of speech and of a slow tongue.” In response, the Lord promises Moses that he himself will be with his mouth and teach him what to say. Moses's older brother, Aaron, is enlisted to help, since

1 Brabant, “Political Economy,” 101.

“he can speak well.”² For Amos, the Israelite herdsman turned prophet, prophecy is an inevitable consequence of God’s own initial speech activity (Amos 3: 8): “The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?” Even an untrained, undereducated country bumpkin can become superbly eloquent, it seems, if inspired by God.³

In the New Testament, Jesus tells his followers, some of them fishermen with presumably little or no education, that they will “be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles” (Matt. 10: 18). But he advises them “to take no thought beforehand” about what they are to going to say. Instead, they should simply speak “whatsoever shall be given you in that hour.” It is the Holy Spirit and not the disciples themselves, Jesus assures them, who will be doing the speaking (Mark 13: 11).

How is it, then, given the apparent preference in the Bible for verbal spontaneity rather than careful rhetorical analysis and years of elocutionary practice, for divine inspiration rather than the studious imitation of human models, that Cicero, the master rhetorician of ancient Rome, himself painstakingly trained in the art of oratory and deeply immersed in rhetorical theory, had any sort of influence at all on the distinctive rhetoric that developed among Latin-speaking Christians in late antiquity and the Middle Ages, to say nothing of the humanists and ecclesiastical reformers of the sixteenth century?

Non Hominis Nomen Sed Eloquentiae

Let us begin to answer the question just posed by briefly tracing the genealogical outlines of Ciceronian rhetorical theory and practice. For influential as it may have been on the subsequent rhetorical tradition, there is little about Cicero’s *eloquentia* that is truly original, unless one can describe determined eclecticism as a variety of uniqueness.

Rhetoric, from the Greek adjective *rhetorike*, meaning “speaking” or “oratorical,” with the noun *techne* (“art” or “skill”) understood, or, as it has been

2 That Moses’s perceived deficiency in matters elocutionary does not detract in the slightest from his later sustained success as a highly vocal leader of the Israelites might lead one to suppose that his initial protestations of rhetorical incompetence may have been something of an excuse. But according to the Spanish rabbi Bahya ben Asher, Moses perhaps had trouble pronouncing distinctive Hebraic sounds like “sh” (as in “shibboleth”). Other commentators have suggested that he spoke ponderously or had a stutter. Sigmund Freud maintained that Egyptian was his first language, not Hebrew, thus the need for an interpreter. On the possibility that Moses had a speech impediment, see McDermott, *Famous Stutterers*, 1–14.

3 Snyman, “Prophet of God’s Justice,” 17–26.

defined by one of its most thoughtful modern historians, “the art of persuasive communication,” came quite fully developed to Rome from Greece.⁴ As early as the seminal works of Homer (the closest equivalent to the Bible that the ancient Greeks possessed), we find sophisticated examples of eloquence in the speeches of Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax in the ninth book of the *Iliad*, delivered in a vain attempt to try to persuade the petulant Achilles to return to battle. Odysseus’s remarks, in particular, are carefully constructed.⁵ By the fifth century in an increasingly litigious Athens, rhetoric had begun to be systematically studied and taught. Gorgias was one of the first to appreciate fully the powerful effect of diction. He and other sophists were resisted, famously, by Plato, who was himself (ironically enough) an extraordinarily gifted rhetorician.⁶ No doubt it was Plato’s concern with establishing full control of the intellect over the emotions that led him to maintain that rhetoric could surely not be called a real art, but must rather be a sort of *empeiria*, a “knack,” more akin to the art of cooking, say, than a purely intellectual skill (*Gorgias* 462C), that often relied on flattery and could detract from the pursuit of the truth.⁷

Among the most important of all teachers of rhetoric must be counted Plato’s own student, Aristotle. The Stagirite’s famous treatise on the subject includes sensible and influential views on the importance of *ethos* (the knowledge and personal qualities of the speaker which lend him credibility with his audience), *pathos* (the emotions of the audience), and *logos* (the argument), along with his thoughts on style.⁸ Plato’s contemporary, Isocrates, was also quite influential; he made rhetoric the cornerstone of Greek *paideia*.⁹ Aristotle’s student and successor, Theophrastus, contributed to the development of

4 Vickers, *In Defense of Rhetoric*, 1. This chapter owes much to the overviews provided in George Kennedy’s *Art of Persuasion in Greece* as well as his *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition*.

5 On Homer’s rhetoric, see, among others, Karp, “Homeric Origins of Ancient Rhetoric,” 237–258, and Roisman, “Right Rhetoric in Homer,” 429–446.

6 See McAdon, “Plato’s Denunciation of Rhetoric,” 21–39.

7 For the impact of Plato on the history of rhetorical thought, see Marback, *Plato’s Dream of Sophistry*. Despite the serious concerns raised by Plato about the potential abuses of rhetoric, its popularity continued undiminished in his own time and the centuries that followed.

8 To Aristotle we also owe the three-fold categorization of speech contexts: the deliberative, the epideictic (praise or blame), and the juridical (forensic). For a bibliography of scholarship on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, see Walzer, Tiffany, and Gross, *Aristotle’s Rhetoric*, 185–206.

9 For Isocrates’s impact on ancient education, see Poulakos and Depew, *Isocrates and Civic Education*. Isocrates stressed the importance of *kairos* (“timing,” in the broadest sense of the word) and was known for his studious avoidance of hiatus.

the idea of levels of style (*genera dicendi*) which we see articulated later in Cicero's *Orator*.¹⁰

The Roman attitude towards Greek rhetoric was ambivalent, especially at first. The Senate ordered Greek rhetoricians expelled from Rome in 161 BC (Suetonius, *De gramm. et rhet.* 25), and the censors Licinius Crassus and Domitius Ahenobarbus issued a decree disapproving of Latin rhetors as late as 92 BC, when Cicero would already have been a teen-ager.¹¹ Marcus Porcius Cato (the elder), the crusty aristocratic censor, although himself conversant with Greek, was distrustful of rhetoric and suggested that words adequate for any occasion would follow of their own accord, provided the speaker had firm command of the subject matter: "Hold on to your subject; the words will follow" (*rem tene, verba sequentur*).¹² But, however suspicious his contemporaries may have been of Greek or Latin rhetoric, Marcus Tullius Cicero himself was the beneficiary of a well-rounded and intensive education that included training not only in rhetoric, but also in philosophy, law, and even acting, in Rome and abroad.¹³ In *Brutus* (89.305) he tells how, once he had assumed the *toga virilis*, he listened on a daily basis in the forum to the best orators of the day.

Even though Cicero was not born to an aristocratic family—he was what the Romans called a *novus homo*—he eventually emerged as one of the leading political figures of his day, thanks in large part to his practiced eloquence. He handled important legal cases, got deeply involved in matters of state, and quickly climbed up the rungs of the traditional *cursus honorum*. Over fifty of his speeches survive (we have fragments of about twenty more). He also wrote many treatises: on political theory (e.g., *De legibus*); morality (e.g., *Tusculan Disputations*); and metaphysics (e.g., *De natura deorum*). His dialogues on old age and friendship (*De senectute* and *De amicitia*) and his epistolary treatise on duties (*De officiis*) were among Cicero's works best known during the Middle Ages. They helped to establish his reputation not only as a public speaker and politician but also as a moral philosopher.

10 On Theophrastus and his "characters," see Grube, "Theophrastus as Literary Critic," 172–183, and Hendrickson, "Ancient Characters of Style," 249–290.

11 Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome*, 11.

12 On this *sententia*, see Dominik and Hall, *Companion to Roman Rhetoric*, 240. For Cato's contributions to the development of Latin prose, see Sciarrino, *Cato the Censor*.

13 In Asia Minor in 78 BC, Cicero studied with Menippus of Stratonicea, Dionysius of Magnesia, Aeschylus of Cnidus, and Xenocles of Adramyttium (Kennedy, *Art of Rhetoric*, 155). By the time Cicero had finished studying with such prominent Greek teachers of rhetoric as Apollonius Molon of Rhodes and Demetrius of Syria in Athens, he had grown very familiar indeed with the theory and practice of Attic oratory.

Cicero wrote a number of theoretical considerations of rhetoric, including the artfully constructed dialogue *De oratore*, as well as *Brutus* and *Orator*. The work that found the most sustained circulation during the Middle Ages was his youthful treatment of invention (*De inventione*). Also influential was *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, a comprehensive rhetorical handbook widely used during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance (sometimes called simply *Rhetorica secunda* because it was so often the rhetorical text taught immediately following *De inventione*). Until doubt was thrown on its authenticity in the fifteenth century, *Ad Herennium* was quite commonly attributed to Cicero.¹⁴

Of the traditional five parts into which the *vis oratoris* was divided, Cicero's *De inventione* dealt with the first. *Inventio* has obvious priority because before one can determine how best to say something, it is critical to "discover" what exactly it is that one is going to say. For Cicero, *res*, that is to say, "content" (literally, "things"; other possible translations include "subject matter," "ideas," or even "substance"), must take precedence over *verba* ("words"). As the budding orator puts it at the beginning of this youthful treatise, while it is true that wisdom unassisted by eloquence can languish and be of little practical use to anyone, it is better than eloquence without wisdom, which can do great damage to a commonwealth. Words can be not only frivolous but positively dangerous when detached from truth. But why must *verba* and *res* be at odds? The two are inseparably joined:

So if any one neglects the most correct and honorable pursuits of reason and duty and throws himself entirely into developing his speaking abilities, he trains himself to be useless to himself and dangerous to the fatherland of which he is a citizen. But if he arms himself with eloquence in such a way that he does not thwart the good of his fatherland, but is able to fight on its behalf, that man seems to me to be a citizen who will be most useful and friendly to his own interests and the public's.

De inventione 1.1.1; TEUBNER, 1965

Inventio is a heuristic exercise, especially useful for the kinds of forensic oratory so popular in the Rome of Cicero's day. It is devoted to clarifying the

14 Since it was associated with Cicero and Ciceronianism for so many centuries, *Ad Herennium* will be cited frequently in the pages that follow, even though it was almost surely not written by Cicero himself, but by an unknown contemporary. See the discussion in Caplan, *Ad Herennium*, ix–xiv.

exact point or status of the question in dispute.¹⁵ Appropriate arguments can then be developed for the enthymemes, the second and third elements of the traditional syllogism.¹⁶ This is where the *loci* come into play.¹⁷ Time-honored starting points for an argument include: an appeal to authority; the danger of setting a precedent; the existence of a precedent; evoking a sense of shame; the relatively insignificant nature of an offense; and the like.¹⁸

The second element in this rhetorical schema, *dispositio*, addresses the order in which what is to be said should be best presented, its arrangement.¹⁹ As Plato notes (*Phaedrus* 264C), there is something organic about a speech. Like a human body it should have separate parts, but they must be conjoined in a way that makes unitary sense. Like a story, a speech must have a beginning, a middle, and an end, and all of these elements must be joined together fittingly. A typical Ciceronian speech begins with an introduction in which the subject is broached. It can be approached clearly and directly (*perspicue et protinus*) or from a slightly oblique angle (*insinuatio*), depending upon how strong a case the speaker happens to have.²⁰ Often employed here is the *captatio benevolentiae*, a rhetorical strategy by means of which the speaker tries to win credibility with an audience. The device can also be used to express a self-deprecating, but usually winning, apprehension on the speaker's part, avowing his lack of expertise in, let us say, public speaking. Its aim is to render the hearer benevolent, attentive, and receptive. The *narratio* follows, a straightforward presentation of what has happened or an explanation of a problem, set forth in a sequential, usually chronological, manner, in order to lay the foundation for the arguments that will follow. A *divisio* (or *partitio*) may be included at

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- 15 Examples of clarifying questions include: Did a client actually do what the prosecutors claim he did? Is it really a crime? Is he the kind of person who would be likely to do such a thing? Even if there is no question that the accused did what he is being accused of, what was his intention, or his state of mind, when he did it? Has the right venue been chosen to consider a particular case? (Perhaps it needs to be transferred to another jurisdiction or considered under a different set of laws.) Are the laws that apply to a case themselves unjust?
- 16 The first premise is most often left unexpressed in an enthymeme, making for briefer and more forceful argumentation.
- 17 On Cicero's use of *loci*, see Rubinelli, *Ars Topica*, 93ff.
- 18 "Commonplaces" can be used effectively, then and now, in such contexts: e.g., *abusus non tollit usum; de minimis non curat lex; omnis analogia claudicat* (or their English equivalents).
- 19 On *dispositio*, see Barber, *Rhetoric in Cicero's Pro Balbo*, Chap. 4. See also Enos, "Ciceronian *Dispositio*," 108–110.
- 20 Cerutti, *Cicero's Accretive Style*, 12.

this point (sometimes enumerated) that helps explicitly to forecast for the audience the main points of the argument to follow (*De inventione* 1.31–3).²¹ There follows the argumentation for one's point with specific proof (*confirmatio*), buttressed by enthymemes, maxims, examples, fables, etc. The positive case would be incomplete unless correlated with the refutation of alternative points of view (*confutatio*).²² Possible objections to the case should be anticipated, the inevitable concessions made early on.²³ The *peroratio*, stirring up emotions or perhaps calming them, reminds the listeners one more time of what the problem or issue was, and, most importantly, of what they need to reconsider or decide or now do. So the typical speech is concluded.²⁴ This ordering is a useful paradigm, but it may be modified as circumstances dictate.

Elocutio ("style"), the third division of speech, is notoriously hard to describe and analyze consistently.²⁵ Quintilian calls it the "part of our work, which, it is agreed by all orators, is the most difficult."²⁶ Not every speaker speaks the same way all the time. Not all listeners judge by the same criteria. No other element of rhetoric is so much an expression of the individual personality and so independent of and impervious to education and training.²⁷ The canons of *elocutio* include clarity, correctness, ornament, and appropriateness (*decorum*). Clarity is one of the principle tenets of Ciceronian eloquence. To be effective the orator must be able to express himself in such a way that everything he says or does promotes his intelligibility, instead of, say, shrouding his utterances with the kind of mysterious obscurity that so often characterizes prophetic utterances or poetry. Correctness is also critical. The effective speaker must steer clear of odd sounding expressions, neologisms, or slang and argot (except for special effect) and avoid grammatical errors. Ornamentation is important to

21 See the discussion of *partitio* in Hughes, *Early Christian Rhetoric*, 38ff.

22 For the use of *confutatio* in early modern England, see Sheppard, *Anti-Atheism*, 48–51.

23 Considering other points of view may help to make the presentation of the speaker's case seem more objective and fair and also serve to undermine the opponent's case in advance.

24 On the dramatic and poetic qualities of the *peroratio* of the *Pro Milone*, see Tzounakas, "Peroration of *Pro Milone*," 129–141.

25 "Elocution," the familiar English word derived from *elocutio*, has undergone a semantic narrowing that has carried its present meaning rather far away from the more holistic connotations of the Latin word from which it is derived.

26 Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 8, *Proem.* 13 (LCL 126,314). For a thorough discussion of Cicero's style, with abundant examples, see von Albrecht, *Cicero's Style*.

27 As E.B. White, the American author and co-editor of *The Elements of Style* ("Strunk & White"), notes in his "Art of the Essay #1": "Style results more from what a person is than from what he knows."

consider if one seeks to have an *elocutio* possessed of a degree of *elegantia*. An elegant style is characterized by the apt use of figures of speech and thought (*schemata*). These verbal ornaments are useful, not merely decorative; they serve not only to delight (*delectare*) but to move (*movere*) the mind and the heart. Perhaps the single most characteristic quality of Cicero's oratory is its strongly emotional appeal, and it is these figures, ancient and popular in origin and often associated with what M.L. Clarke calls "excited rhetoric," that he used so often and to such good effect as exquisitely powerful mechanisms to move the emotions.²⁸ At the same time, Cicero was fully aware that it is all too easy to misuse figures and to overdo ornamentation. Figures must always be used *apte congruenterque*. *Ornatio* can make all the difference in bringing the speaker's words to life, but when exactly verbal ornamentation is to be used and to what extent are tricky considerations that are difficult to teach. If the speaker has had a good education, has studied hard, and has imitated the best models, then he will be able to make effective use of "the graces of style."²⁹ *Decorum* is the art of knowing how best to express what one says and, just as important, what to leave unsaid.³⁰

There are different levels or types of style (*genera dicendi*), ranging from two to as many as twenty in number in the rhetorical handbooks, but they are usually said to be three, and the adjectives associated with them vary widely. The three-fold categorization employed by Cicero in *Orator* (21.69) is as follows: *subtile*, used for proof (*probare*); *modicum*, used for delight (*delectare*); and *vehemens*, used for persuasion (*flectere*).³¹ These stylistic registers are not exclusively limited to one kind of discourse or even one part of a speech, and all three may be effectively used by any one speaker in the same speech activity.³² There are negative counterparts of the three *genera dicendi*: the *sufflata* style, which is turgid and inflated, overusing neologisms or archaisms, awkward metaphors, and more impressive diction than is appropriate; the *dissolutum* or *fluctuans*, which is luke-warm, tentative, and lacking in vigor; and the *exile*,

28 See the extended discussion in the third book of Cicero's *De oratore*. On the importance of delight and persuasion for medieval aesthetics, see the essays collected in Carruthers, *Rhetoric beyond Words*.

29 "It is these that make men thrill with horror, gaze open-mouthed at the speaker, cry aloud and think him a god" (Clarke, *Rhetoric at Rome*, 60).

30 On the meaning of *decorum* for Cicero and its rootedness in the *communis sensus* as well as the speaker's own *prudencia*, see Kapust, "Cicero on Decorum," 92–112.

31 In *Ad Herennium* (4.8.11) these are called *ad tenuata*, *mediocris*, and *gravis*.

32 See Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 13, on the expression "speech activity" instead of John Searle's "speech act" or J.L. Austin's clunky "performative utterance."

which is dry and bloodless, with no verve and missing the elegant simplicity of the plain style at its best.³³

The fourth and fifth traditional divisions of speech are delivery (*pronuntiatio* or *actio*), and memory.³⁴ When asked to identify the primary element of rhetoric, according to Quintilian (*Inst. orat.* 11.3.6), the famed Attic orator Demosthenes gave first, second, and third place to “delivery.” In this category are included considerations of vocal quality and the speaker’s physical bearing and movements.³⁵ Some vocal qualities are native, while others may be learned. During the introduction to a speech, the speaker’s voice should be calm and relaxed, and there should be plenty of pauses. This warms up the speaker’s voice and helps the audience to begin to think through issues with which they are probably less familiar than the speaker. By contrast, as the ending of the speech nears, the voice may rise, gain in speed, and there can be fewer pauses. The tone to be used in debate can be either broken or sustained as it serves to rouse listeners to action or to sympathy, but it should not be conversational. Explication should be done with a thinner voice. Narration lends itself to frequent vocal variation, depending on the stage of the story.³⁶ Delivery designed to arouse the audience’s sympathy can be enhanced by long pauses.³⁷

Like the voice, one’s physical bearing and gestures were also not considered incidental matters in ancient theories of speaking, although such considerations receive less attention today in our more literate world. The right hand, especially its extension, plays an important role in the speech activity. In explication, the speaker’s body should lean forward from the shoulders.

33 *Ad Herennium* 4.10.15f. For similar descriptive language, see Horace, *Ars poetica* 25–27.

34 These two categories were not infrequently linked closely and considered together; see Jakobi, “Ps. Augustinus,” 194–196.

35 Thanks to the modern phenomenon of artificial vocal amplification (the microphone), matters of pronunciation or enunciation are not of such importance for speech making today, but the volume, stability, and flexibility of the voice were critical factors in Cicero’s day.

36 Facetiousness can be achieved by a gentle quiver of the voice and the slight suggestion of a smile. Exhortations can be uttered with the utmost speed and should be very thin toned. (Much of the discussion of delivery and memory here is based on the third book of *Ad Herennium*.)

37 Just as “rests” play an important part in a musical composition, studied pauses in the course of a speech activity are not simply the absence of sound, but a lively counterweight that can be used effectively to offer relief to audience members who may need to regain their emotional composure, or fully comprehend a complex thought, or absorb the impact of a powerful figure. The speaker’s silence may also build suspense in the listener’s mind as to what will be said next.

In sustained debate, the right arm should move quickly and the eyes glance around keenly. For a more abrupt style of debating, one can pace up and down and stamp the right foot. To achieve a pathetic affect, one need only slap the thigh or clap a hand to the head.³⁸

Memory plays an important role in ancient Greco-Roman rhetoric.³⁹ Imitating models, practicing set pieces, paraphrasing prose and poetry written by others, all played critical roles in rhetorical education.⁴⁰ Using mnemonic techniques that were supposed to go as far back as the poet Simonides, the successful orator could be confident that he would not stray far from the path he had planned to follow through the course of a speech, no matter how complex, lengthy, or emotionally charged.⁴¹ The association of ideas with objects was a critical component of memorization. The more striking or even bizarre the item chosen for association (not a sunset, for example, but an eclipse of the sun), the more memorable.⁴²

The mastery of rhetoric was the culminating point of Roman education. At the earliest stage of their formal education, young Romans were taught by *grammatici* the mechanics of reading and writing and speaking, beginning with pronunciation and spelling, with an emphasis on correctness, avoiding barbarisms and solecisms—using mainly poetry.⁴³ The remaining years of a young Roman's schooling were devoted to the study of rhetoric. The other liberal arts did not play such a prominent role. Logic or dialectic, the third element in what would come to be known as the *trivium*, was simply subsumed under the art of rhetoric, according to Quintilian. How can one be persuasive if one is not making logical sense?⁴⁴

38 On the proper ancient use of hand gestures, see Hall, "Cicero and Quintilian," 143–160.

39 Given the strongly oral-aural nature of communication in a time when literacy was not wide spread and technological innovations like the teleprompter which have transformed the nature of communication today did not yet exist, the ability to memorize was a fundamental rhetorical skill.

40 It is no accident that in Hesiod's account (*Theogony* 915–7), the mother of the Muses, the inspirational sources of the arts, was Mnemosyne (the Greek word for memory).

41 On "memory places," see den Boer, "Loci memoriae," 19–25.

42 For a reevaluation of the central role memory played in intellectual life throughout the Middle Ages, see Carruthers, *Book of Memory*. On the suspicion of Erasmus and Melancthon of the use of such artificial modes to enhance memory, see Yates, *Art of Memory*, 127.

43 The serious study of poetry was seen as a valuable propaedeutic for rhetoric (see Cicero's appreciative observations in *Pro Archia* 5.12–16) and regularly included instruction in figures and tropes. On the important role of grammarians in the educational world of late antiquity, see Kaster, *Guardians of Language*.

44 Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 5.14.27–31. Lorenzo Valla followed Quintilian in subsuming dialectic under rhetoric; see Nauta, *In Defense of Common Sense*, 235, on "Valla's 'rhetorization' of dialectic."

Can the art of using words persuasively be taught? Is it an art at all? Perhaps orators are born, not made. After all, simply analyzing other speakers' successes or even understanding fully how they achieve their effects is no guarantee that one's own discourse will be equally effectual.⁴⁵ Cicero takes up the question in *De oratore*. If rhetoric is a *techne* (and not a sort of intuitive *atechnia*), one must explain what kind of art it is. Is it an art that is fundamentally flawed since it can be used for less than virtuous purposes? Is it an art that is ultimately futile, a vain exercise, akin to trying to pass peas through the eye of a needle? Cicero upholds the value of rhetoric as the art of arts, not only as a useful preparatory tool for elites preparing to lead active lives in the Rome of his day but also as a virtue.⁴⁶

For Romans such as Cicero rhetoric was a discipline that involved not only the refinement of communication skills, but the development of personal and civic morality. As such, it came to occupy a central place in the Roman conception of the liberal arts education. There was already in Hellenistic culture, to be sure, a well developed idea of an *enkyklios paideia*, that is to say, an education befitting "the general culture of the educated gentleman," or "an ideal secondary education that prepared the mind for a life of contemplating ideas," as opposed to the kind of training required for success in the trades.⁴⁷ But the heavy emphasis on rhetoric's central role in the long tradition of liberal education owes a great deal to the Romans.⁴⁸ The teaching of rhetoric in Rome was never disconnected from its moral underpinnings and its practical purposes. The most persuasive orator was "a *good* man who was skilled in speaking" (*vir bonus, peritus dicendi*). And eloquence was itself not simply a technique, but "one of the highest virtues."⁴⁹

It may be tempting to dismiss an education that devoted so much time and energy to mastering the "archaic, cumbrous and ineffective" speech of the leisure class, as little more than an exercise in what Thorstein Veblen called

45 As Samuel Butler observes in the first Canto (89–90) of his *Hudibras*: "For all a rhetorician's rules/Teach nothing but to name his tools."

46 The Stoic philosopher Zeno famously likened dialectic to a closed fist and rhetoric to an open hand (*Orator* 32.113). If the former image brings to mind the decisive power a compelling argument has to end a discussion or debate and bring about a sense of closure, the latter suggests that words can be used winsomely to invite others to adopt another point of view (or even to remain open-minded) by appealing to their emotions as well as to the intellect.

47 See Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 9. It is possible to understand *enkyklios paideia* as either comprehensive or basic education. See also Marrou, *History of Education*, 176–177.

48 Kimball, *Orators and Philosophers*, makes this point.

49 *De oratore* 3.14.55 (LCL 349.42).

“conspicuous consumption,” an arbitrary marker of elite status.⁵⁰ But Latin rhetorical exercises (*progymnasmata*; *declamationes*) were actually of great practical importance, as Martin Bloomer has pointed out, for the training of young Roman elite males and the development of their adult personas.⁵¹ Rhetorical expertise was a critical means of perpetuating the elite status of select individuals and groups in ancient Rome. By playing a variety of roles and developing verbal strategies for imaginary situations, students of rhetoric were not simply indulging in verbal play for its own sake, but actually preparing to take their proper place in a society where power depended to a large extent upon a man’s ability to use language effectively.⁵² Such exercises would prove to be extremely useful for young men on the verge of an adult life, when they would enter into complex patron/client relationships and bear direct responsibility for large households, including slaves, and quite possibly be given military commands.⁵³ Whether fantastical or stereotypical, situations and characters encountered in theory or play could be useful paradigms in real life when inexperienced young adults were thrust into unfamiliar circumstances or found themselves dealing with new (and possibly difficult) people.⁵⁴

Unlike some rhetorical theoreticians, Cicero not only taught others how to speak, but could also himself speak extremely well in public. Indeed, he was one of the last Romans to exert civic influence by using only words, without an army at his back. And his spoken and written words had powerful effects, for good or ill, serving as models for others for centuries to come. That Quintilian, an influential teacher of rhetoric from Spain in the first century AD who

50 Veblen, *Theory of the Leisure Class*, 399.

51 See Bloomer, “Schooling in Persona,” 57–78, and, more generally, Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity*.

52 As they gave imaginary advice to Alexander as to what he should do now that he had conquered the entire known world, or consulted with Cicero as he wondered whether to ask Mark Antony for forgiveness (actual topics for *suasoriae*, as we know from the writings of Seneca the Elder), young Romans learned how to set foot in another person’s world without losing their own identities. By defending or prosecuting a son discovered preparing a poisoned potion after having been disinherited by his father (one of Seneca’s sample *controversiae*), a budding Roman rhetorician might learn how to explore the limits of the law and the circumstances of a particular case—from a safe distance.

53 The applicability here of Theophrastus’s work on different personality types (and the generic characters found in the comedies of Plautus and Terence) is clear.

54 The imaginative faculties require as much exercise as others if they are to be cultivated in the young. Perhaps it is the very effort involved in putting oneself in another time and place and being exposed to (and actually adopting) unfamiliar ways of locution that makes such educational experiences so meaningful and their effects so enduring.

articulated his pedagogical aims and practices in a highly popular treatise entitled *Institutio oratoria*, could declare Cicero's name to be synonymous with eloquence (*non hominis nomen sed eloquentiae*),⁵⁵ was no foregone conclusion. Indeed, it was the extraordinarily high value that Quintilian and other subsequent Roman rhetoricians assigned to Cicero as "the only model" for speaking and for teaching the art of speaking, that was decisive in helping to secure for the Republican rhetor a permanent position in Roman liberal education for years to come.⁵⁶

For his oratorical purposes Cicero pursued a limpid, well balanced, periodic style that embraced hypotaxis (heavy use of subordinate clauses) and featured a plentiful supply of words (*copiose dicere*) and aptly employed figures. The period is a long, artfully balanced sentence with distinct members and concludes with ringing, memorable *clausulae*, the often predictable cadences with which periods ended. (One of Cicero's favorite concluding phrases was *esse videatur*.) Such pacing and rhythm mattered enormously for Cicero and his audiences, for whom most discourse was delivered and apprehended orally, not in writing.⁵⁷ Cicero himself described his speaking style with the following adverbs: *pure*, *Latine*, *plane*, *dilucide*, *ornate*, *apte*, *decore*, and *copiose*.⁵⁸ His Latin prose is correct and clear, flows steadily, does not eschew ornament or full explanations; it is always understandable and well suited for the occasion.⁵⁹

Perhaps the best known Latin prose stylist who could be chosen to compare with Cicero for contrastive purposes is Julius Caesar, the talented, ambitious general and statesman of whose assassination Cicero approved. Caesar took full advantage of the Latin language's unique capacity for concision. It is a language with neither a definite nor an indefinite article, and, like other inflected languages, it relies less on prepositions and modal auxiliaries than modern English and more on inflected endings (to indicate case, number, and gender for nouns, adjectives, and pronouns, and to indicate mood, tense, voice, person, and number for verbs).

One of Caesar's most celebrated sayings consists of just three words: *Veni, vidi, vici*, ("I came; I saw; I conquered") describing a remarkably quick and

55 *Inst. orat.* 10.1.112 (LCL 127,312).

56 Quintilian quotes Cicero's works 689 times (van der Poel, "Cicero through Quintilian's Eyes," 47).

57 For a detailed acoustical analysis of the opening words of *De oratore*, see Leonhardt, *Latin*, 67–71.

58 Scott, *Controversies over the Imitation of Cicero*, 3.

59 The style with which Cicero's name is most often connected is "a full, ornate, magnificent utterance in which emotion constantly swells up and is constantly ordered and disciplined by superb intellectual control" (Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 323).

decisive victory over a king in Pontus in 46 BC.⁶⁰ Brevity is one of Caesar's hallmarks. The opening lines of Caesar's commentaries on the Gallic Wars (*De bello Gallico*), are also very well known:

Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres, quarum unam incolunt Belgae, aliam Aquitani, tertiam qui ipsorum lingua Celtae, nostra Galli appellantur.

TEUBNER, 1968, 7

All of Gaul is divided into three parts, one of which the Belgians inhabit, the second, the Aquitanians, and the third, those who are called "Celts" in their own language, but in ours "Gauls."

Without any introduction, Caesar plunges right into the matter at hand, the geography of the province he was assigned to subdue. The style of the first sentence is direct, simple, unadorned, and devoid of any of the difficult or exotic words that Caesar recommended speakers avoid (just the way a traveler would walk around a rock that lay in his path). The syntax is relatively uncomplicated, a straightforward independent clause beginning with the subject, followed by the copula, predicate adjectives and a prepositional phrase, and a subordinate, relative clause with three parts. The only complexity here is the variation on the name "Celt" or "Gaul."⁶¹

Cicero could speak and write as simply as this, too, as we see in his letters and in the *narrationes* of his speeches. In *Ep. ad Fam.* 9.21.1 (LCL 216,186), he remarks: "For I do not always speak in the same way. For what does a letter have in common with a judicial case or a speech?" By the same token, Caesar, no doubt, could also wax copiously eloquent when appropriate. The passage above is taken not from one of his speeches, but his war commentaries. But, regardless of how fair such stylistic characterizations might be, both the names of Cicero and Caesar have come to be associated with a distinctive kind of prose style respectively.⁶²

60 Suetonius, *Divus Julius* (LCL 31,82).

61 On the development of Caesar's distinctive prose style, see Schlicher, "Caesar's Narrative Style," 212–224.

62 It is well to keep in mind the dangers of oversimplification in such judgments, a point which Ralph Johnson has memorably made of Ciceronian "grandeur" (*Luxuriance and Economy*, 1): "Grandeur has come to bore us, and Cicero's oratory has come to bore many of us very much. Yet it is this somewhat puritanical attitude of ours to questions of style, this illusion that no extravagance in prose can be good, that has enabled us to fight free of a long held and mistaken notion about Cicero's stylistic practice: we see now that the term 'Ciceronian style,' which has long been so crucial in histories of prose style, is a vast

Cicero is famous for his distinctive *elocutio*, particularly evident in his speeches, where his masterful deployment of sparkling verbal ornaments, the *lumina dicendi*, can perhaps be best discerned and appreciated, as he devotes himself to stirring up the apathetic, admonishing the timid and base, issuing fiery challenges to the powerful, and appealing to the *mos maiorum*, the powerful claims of Roman tradition. A brief analysis of the famous opening lines from Cicero's first oration against the mutinous aristocrat Catiline (63 BC) may serve to illustrate this point.⁶³

Quo usque tandem abutere, Catilina, patientia nostra? quam diu etiam furor iste tuus nos eludet? quem ad finem sese effrenata iactabit audacia? Nihilne te nocturnum praesidium Palati, nihil urbis vigiliae, nihil timor populi, nihil concursus bonorum omnium, nihil hic munitissimus habendi senatus locus, nihil horum ora voltusque moverunt? Patere tua consilia non sentis, constrictam iam horum omnium scientia teneri coniurationem tuam non vides? Quid proxima, quid superiore nocte egeris, ubi fueris, quos convocaveris, quid consili ceperis, quem nostrum ignorare arbitraris? O tempora, o mores! Senatus haec intellegit, consul videt; hic tamen vivit. Vivit? Immo vero etiam in senatum venit, fit publici consili particeps, notat et designat oculis ad caedem unum quemque nostrum.

How long now will you go on abusing our patience, Catiline? For what length of time will this raving madness of yours still mock us? What will ever stop you from vaunting yourself with unbridled effrontery? Does not the nightly watch on the Palatine, the guards who are keeping watch over the city, the fear on the part of the general public, all the meetings of loyal men that are taking place, the fact that the senate has to meet in this specially protected location, the expression on the faces of these men, does none of these things move you? Don't you see that your plans have been exposed, that your conspiracy has been hobbled because everyone here knows of it? Do you think any of us don't know what you did last night,

oversimplification, for Cicero did not always write grandly, nor is his grandeur all of a piece." Prejudicial statements against the "grand" Ciceronian style, then and now, may have more to tell us about the critics who express them than they do about Cicero and the way he actually spoke and wrote.

63 *In Catilinam* 1.1 (OCT, 1965). This has long been among the most studied and quoted of Cicero's speeches. As recently as 2014, an American senator used its opening lines to attack a presidential order regarding immigration, substituting the president's name for Catiline's (McCabe, "Cruz turns to Roman Orations to Bash Obama Immigration Order," *Briefing Room*).

the night before, where you were, whom you met, what plans you made? O what times! O what morals! The senate knows these things; the consul sees them; nonetheless he lives. He *lives*? In fact, he even comes into the senate, takes part in public deliberations, and with his eyes notices and marks for slaughter each one of us.

There is no gradual build-up here, no indirect approach to the point—the situation is too grave. Instead, the speaker begins with a startling series of short rhetorical questions. As Quintilian notes, Cicero could simply have made his point in the following bald manner, as a declarative statement (rather than a question): *Diu abuteris patientia nostra* (“You have abused our patience for a long time now”).⁶⁴ But the three-fold repetition is not simply prolix; it serves to establish the speaker’s *ethos* (he is rightly indignant), and it helps to capture and immediately focus his audience’s attention on the *kairos*. Catiline, who has just attempted to overthrow the Republic, has the brazen audacity the very next day to sit openly in the senators’ midst. It is the moment of truth, when the speaker must not just calmly instruct his hearers as to what is going on and alert them to the gravity of the situation (*docere*) but also arouse their passions (*pathos*).⁶⁵

Cicero uses figures that rely on sound effects (such as alliteration and assonance, both in evidence in the opening lines) which affect the ear primarily, but there are also figures of thought and tropes, which involve mental maneuvers. In the passage above, these include the alliterative polyptoton (ringing changes on the interrogative pronoun: *quo ... quam ... quem*) and the equine metaphor implicit in the participle *effrenata* to describe the dangerous effrontery of Catiline. Some figures appeal to sound and sense at the same time, as, for instance, the tricolon in the passage above, or the emphatic repetition (*anaphora* in Greek or *repetitio* in Latin) of the word *nihil* that characterizes the first long sentence in the speech. Following the first set of questions, there is a second set, much shorter, in contrast, in which Cicero piles up six interrogative pronouns (*quid ... quid ... ubi ... quos ... quid ... quam*) in breathless fashion. As the tempo increases, so does the emotional temperature, as Cicero immediately exclaims: *O tempora, o mores*, and declares without taking time to use the usual conjunctions (asyndeton): *Senatus haec intellegit, consul videt*.

64 *Inst. orat.* 9.2.7–8 (LCL 127,38).

65 For all Cicero knew, some senators present might have felt a certain degree of sympathy for the aristocratic Catiline and even harbored some resentment against the speaker, the *novus homo* standing before them. This was no ordinary speech given on an ordinary day; it was, quite literally, a matter of life and death for the speaker.

Then there comes an arresting instance of anadiplosis (repeating the final word of a preceding clause): *Hic tamen vivit. Vivit?*

That the speech was effective, we may gather not just from an analysis of its formal merits, including its verbal ornaments, but from its actual effect: Catiline left Rome; some of his followers were executed; Cicero survived.⁶⁶

Given its later wide-spread and normative use, it is easy now to underestimate how unusual or even objectionable Cicero's way of speaking sounded to some Romans of his day. Already in his own lifetime the esteemed orator had deemed it necessary to defend his style. Contemporaries like Calvus and Brutus preferred a snappier style characterized by simplicity and brevity and that avoided appealing to the emotions.⁶⁷ Cicero's speeches were painfully slow, redundant, and too elaborate, to their way of thinking. His style was found to be "rather inflated, Asiatic, redundant, repetitious, sometimes cold-blooded, with broken structures, extravagant, and almost, God forbid, effeminate."⁶⁸ If there is a spectrum of ancient Greco-Roman stylistic prose with "Atticism" at one extreme, Cicero's oratorical style should be judged as falling closer to the other end, namely the "Asiatic."

After his death, the pseudonymous *Invectiva in M. Tullium Ciceronem* (attributed to Sallust) attacked him sharply. One of his later critics, Largius Licinius, wrote a treatise on Cicero's style entitled *Ciceromastix* ("the scourge of Cicero"). Cicero's "plodding" style also came in for criticism from the brilliant stylist, Seneca the Younger. The Stoic philosopher was impatient with Cicero's slow and predictable closing rhythmical patterns: "What should I say about that style in which words are postponed and, after they have been long awaited, just manage to make their appearance in the *clausulae*? What about those slow endings, characteristic of Cicero's style, deflected, gently holding back, and ending in almost the same way with the same predictable rhythm?"⁶⁹

With the death of Cicero and the beginning of the Empire under Augustus and his successors, forms of oratory that had traditionally flourished in a politically riotous age came to play a less important role than they had done

66 On Cicero's ethos in this speech, see Craig, "Self-Restraint, Invective, and Credibility," 335–339. Cicero was sent into exile after his consulship for his role in pushing for the conspirators to be executed.

67 Such a bare, "Lysian," way of speaking (the Attic orator Lysias was considered the model for such discourse), and the literary style of Stoic philosophers like Cleanthes and his student Chrysippus, was far more appealing to the "neo-Atticists" than Cicero's full-bodied style which seemed by contrast *otiosum atque disiunctum* ("leisurely and loosely structured").

68 Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 12.10.12 (LCL 494,288).

69 Ep. 114.16 (LCL 77,310).

previously. Indeed, Quintilian's contemporary, the historian Tacitus, complains about the general deterioration of rhetoric in his *Dialogus de oratoribus*. One of the characters in the dialogue, Marcus Aper, a devotee of more fashionable modes of discourse, praises Cicero for the care he took in composing and polishing his speeches, but finds his style slow and tiresome. Another criticism of Cicero's early style is expressed in *Dialog.* 22 (LCL 35,290): "His earlier speeches do not lack the old vices: he is sluggish when he begins, long-winded in his narrations, tiresome in his digressions; he is slow to be aroused and rarely warms to his task; only a few sentences end aptly and with a certain brightness."⁷⁰

Despite this chorus of criticism, the unwavering promotion of Cicero by Quintilian, who was appointed to an influential chair of rhetoric in Rome by Vespasian, ultimately prevailed.⁷¹ Pliny the Younger, one of Quintilian's students, is more Ciceronian than Senecan in his style. Even during the second century when Latin prose authors like Fronto began to turn to archaic Latin authors such as Cato the Elder as a source for vocabulary, it could be said that such archaisms served the same kind of function that grace notes do in music: "they did not signal a thoroughgoing stylistic change."⁷² Cicero's Latinity remained the norm.

Even without the active support of Quintilian, however, it seems likely that Cicero would have become a "classic" author, one whose works are read for more than one generation. The Latin language itself had become more or less "fixed" within his lifetime, thanks in considerable part to his own tireless literary efforts. As Leonhardt and others have observed, beginning in the first century BC the Latin language was increasingly becoming "the province of the educated elites" and in that process grew farther removed from "natural language," with increasing emphasis placed upon the kind of correctness associated with official communication, rather than the immediacy one associates with "unforced communication with friends and family." Whether this establishment of new and stable norms for Latin prose owed more to the fact that "Cicero and his contemporaries had so perfected Latin that their enthusiastic successors deemed it definitive as a model and undertook no further

70 For a comprehensive study of Tacitus's *Dialogue*, see van den Berg, *World of Tacitus' Dialogue*.

71 Quintilian acknowledged that Cicero could have employed *sententiae* more often, but that was pretty much the extent of his criticism. Seneca, by contrast, did use *clarae sententiae*, but they were too short for Quintilian's liking (*Inst. orat.* 10.1.129–30). The emperor Caligula criticized the fragmentary nature of Senecan style: *harena sine calce* (Suetonius, *Caligula* 53.2; LCL 31,494).

72 Leonhardt, *Latin*, 84.

changes,” or was simply a function of the dramatic political changes involved in the transformation of the Roman republic to the imperial regime begun by Augustus, is unclear.⁷³ Perhaps, as Wilfried Stroh has suggested, Latin died because of its own beauty.⁷⁴ The fact that the works of Cicero and other “Golden Age” authors were regarded so highly by their overawed linguistic successors guaranteed that their achievements would remain *sans pareil*. If Latin had not become a “fixed” language at this time, its very long life thereafter would have been less certain. Even as vulgar Latin continued to evolve and eventually gave birth in the Middle Ages to the Romance languages, the Latin of Cicero exercised enormous influence precisely because it did not change all that much. In late antiquity, with the division of the empire by Diocletian, the rise of Christianity, and the growing split between the eastern, Greek-speaking, parts of the Empire, and the western, Latin half, Cicero’s hold on his lofty position as the epitome of excellence in Latin prose grew, if anything, more secure. As long as rhetorical education itself continued to flourish, as it did, without any appreciable abatement in the West until the time the Roman Empire had ceased to exist in the fifth century, Cicero continued to be held up as *the* model for all students of Latin prose to admire and imitate.

“Spoiling the Egyptians”

The Bible contains a wide variety of literary styles, many of which bear little resemblance to Ciceronianism, so it is a remarkable testimony to the power of Ciceronian eloquence that Christian Latin discourse should have come to bear any sort of resemblance to it at all. One of the most distinguishing features of the poetic style of the Old Testament, for instance, is the practice of *parallelismus membrorum*. One sentence is followed by another (sometimes more), which means almost the same thing as the first (“synonymous parallelism”), or it turns into something that is practically the opposite (“antithetical parallelism”).⁷⁵ The first lines of Psalm 23, originally in Hebrew, illustrate the former principle in a way that is clear even in English translation:

73 Ibid., 58.

74 Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 109–112.

75 Bishop Robert Lowth, *De sacra poesi Hebraeorum praelectiones*, Lecture xix (Oxford, 1753), was one of the first to identify and study this poetic form. Other varieties include: synthetic, emblematic, introverted, palillogical, perfect, and imperfect parallelisms. For a detailed study of the antithetical variety, see Krašovec, *Antithetic Structure in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*. Simple definitions are difficult to find for such a complex phonological and lexical

The Lord is my shepherd;
 I shall not want.
 He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
 He leadeth me beside the still waters.

The second line explains and applies the metaphorical description of the first. It is because of the fact that the Lord treats his people in the same way a shepherd cares for his sheep that the needs of the psalmist (and those reading or singing this psalm) are satisfied. The third and fourth lines amplify the metaphor of shepherding further. The third line deals with food; the fourth with water. Both are essential for animals and humans to survive, but they are different from each other, too. And these basic necessities are supplied at more than a minimal level. The pastures where the sheep are made to lie down are verdant, not sere and brown (like most grass much of the year in Mediterranean climes), and the waters are not roiling and dangerous to approach, but quiet and safe.

If the parallelism of the first lines of Psalm 23 is somewhat complementary, the last lines of Psalm 1, by contrast, may serve to show how antithetical parallelism can sometimes be: "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous:/But the way of the ungodly shall perish." The second line is very different from the first; the fate of the "righteous" is contrasted with the flighty "ungodly." The one who brings forth fruit like a tree "in his season" is known by the Lord, while the unrighteous will "perish," just like "the chaff which the wind driveth away" (Ps. 1: 3–4). But at the same time there are clear similarities shared by these two opposites; whether righteous or ungodly all humans are walking on a "way," that is to say, living a life, which in the end will be judged by one and the same Lord. This ubiquitous device in Hebrew poetry is quite different from anything regularly found in either prose or poetry written by Greek or Latin authors.⁷⁶

Parallelism is not exclusive to the Old Testament. Here is an example from the first chapter of the Gospel of Luke (verses 52–3), clearly antithetical. Here, too, the effects of the parallelism are manifest even in English translation:

He hath put down the mighty from their seats,
 And exalted them of low degree.

device. See, in general, Berlin, *Dynamics of Biblical Parallelism*, and Kugel, *Idea of Biblical Poetry*.

76 Striking examples of synonymy and antithesis are found in Greco-Roman prose and poetry (especially in elegiac distichs), but they are not nearly so pervasive as parallelism is in the Hebrew Bible.

He hath filled the hungry with good things;
And the rich he hath sent empty away.

The relative situations of the mighty and the humble are contrasted vividly. The hungry are set in dramatic opposition to the rich; the filled are contrasted with those sent away empty.

Another characteristic of biblical discourse is the use of parataxis. As opposed to hypotaxis, parataxis juxtaposes clauses with only minimal or very simple connecting conjunctions, most often “and.” This is especially true of biblical narratives. Well over half of the 39 verses in 2 Samuel 3, for instance, begin with the Hebrew *vav* (“and”). 19 of the 29 verses in the second chapter of Mark’s Gospel begin with *kai* (“and”).⁷⁷ The question of how precisely each one of these verses may be related to the preceding verse is left quite open. In hypotactic prose, by contrast, conjunctions are used to spell out the specific nature of the relationship: causal, adversative, concessive, etc.

To judge from the canonical Gospels’ accounts of Jesus’s speech activities, regardless of whether he is engaged in proclamation (*kerygma*) or teaching (*didache*), stylistic precedents for the discourse of this rabbi whom followers came eventually to acknowledge as the Messiah and the Son of God might be more usefully sought in the Torah, the Psalms, or the Prophets than in contemporary discussions of Greek and Roman rhetoric. The “Beatitudes,” the first words to come out of Jesus’s mouth as he sat down to teach his followers on a mountain in the fifth chapter of Matthew, manifest splendidly this kind of paratactic construction: “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted,” etc. The sentences follow each other closely, one upon the heels of another, with no attempt to coordinate or subordinate them.

Jesus’s discourse here and elsewhere, as represented in the Gospels, is highly rhetorical, peppered with colorful metaphors (“Ye are the salt of the earth”; Matthew 5: 13), maxims (“Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s”; Mark 12: 17), and parables (e.g., Luke 10: 25–37). But his rhetoric does not demonstrate always the kind of “clarity” so closely associated with the principles of classical rhetoric. Sometimes there is no explicit moral point at the conclusion of a parable. Even his disciples have trouble understanding them. Indeed, deliberate obscurity seems to be part of Jesus’s rhetorical intention, as he explains in Matthew 13: 13: “Therefore speak I

77 See Gonzaga, “Paratactic *Kai*,” 580–586. In recent years there has been a great deal of rhetorical criticism devoted to the New Testament; see Mack, *Rhetoric and the New Testament*.

to them in parables: because they seeing see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.”

On occasion we find Jesus teaching in the temple in Jerusalem or in a synagogue, as he did in Capernaum, to the astonishment of all, because, we are told, “his word was with power.”⁷⁸ Luke’s Gospel (4: 16–31) relates how, when Jesus was in his hometown of Nazareth on the Sabbath day in the synagogue, he was given the scroll of Isaiah to read aloud. After he read the first verses of Chapter 61, he rolled the scroll back up, handed it to the attendant, sat down as the eyes of all were fastened on him, and began: “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Those gathered were surprised that someone local, “Joseph’s son,” should speak such “gracious words.” Then Jesus confronted them directly: “Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his country.”⁷⁹ Jesus’s words had a powerful effect: “All they in the synagogue were filled with wrath” and drove him out of the town where they tried to throw him off a cliff. The practice of exegetical preaching (interpreting and applying an authoritative text, as opposed to delivering a prepared, structured, topical speech) lies quite outside the realm of traditional classical rhetorical rules for effective persuasion, as does the direct, unmitigatedly confrontational attitude Jesus took towards his audience here.

The Apostle Paul, by contrast, employs a Greek style in his letters that is more highly schooled.⁸⁰ There are longer and more syntactically complex sentences than are to be found in Jesus’s briskly aphoristic teachings and sayings. Paul employs fewer Hebraisms like the double “Amen” with which so many of Jesus’s discourses begin. He anticipates objections, uses paronomasia (puns or word plays), apostrophe, alliteration, assonance, as well as carefully constructed *cola* and *commata*.

Paul’s missionary trips carried him to the centers of Greco-Roman civilization, cities like Corinth, Athens, and Rome, not just provincial locations where the principles of Greco-Roman rhetoric might have been less often used or appreciated. Paul’s address on the Areopagus to the Athenians (Acts 17: 22–31) is a model of *insinuatio*, the indirect approach, to a controversial

78 More often the settings for Jesus’s speech activities are informal: the rabbi talks as he is walking with his disciples, or standing in the midst of a group of grateful admirers, or answering hostile questions from “scribes and Pharisees.” Once the press of the multitudes was so great that Jesus taught the people on shore from a boat.

79 He goes on to cite the example of Elijah who was sent to a widow in Sidon, even though there were many closer in Israel, and Elisha, who healed none of the many lepers in his own land but chose to cure a Syrian instead.

80 See Classen, “St. Paul’s Epistles,” 319–344. See also the essays collected in Sampley and Lampe, *Paul and Rhetoric*.

subject. He begins by complimenting his audience for their religious sensibility, finds common ground by talking about the altar to the unknown God, quotes from their own poets (Epimenides and Aratus), makes a kairotic appeal (God now commands people “everywhere to repent”), and appears to have his listeners’ attention for a while, at least until he brings up the subject of Jesus’s resurrection. The way in which Paul begins his sermon in Athens is very different from the opening words of John the Baptist’s sermon in the wilderness near the Jordan River to the crowds who had gathered there to be baptized by him (Luke 3: 7): “O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?”

There is a long, rich, and uninterrupted tradition of Christian Greek eloquence in antiquity that includes sermons, treatises, and letters written by Greek church fathers, theologians, and heresiarchs, stretching from Alexandrians like Clement and Origen to the Cappadocian fathers, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory Nazianzus, and beyond. These figures will occupy our attention here only briefly, because they have less of a clear connection with Cicero than we find in the Latin tradition. Biblical and classical styles intermingle freely in the Christian Greek of late antiquity with differing degrees of admixture. The metrical homily of Melito of Sardis on the Pascha from the second century, for example, owes much to Hebraic poetry and the Second Sophistic,⁸¹ while the famous oratorical abilities of John Chrysostom were no doubt developed in the course of his study with the prominent pagan rhetor Libanius.⁸² Possibilities for cultural exchange between the two great linguistic divisions of the post-Constantinian church (Greek and Latin) gradually diminished as doctrinal issues came to the fore, and the permanent split in 1054 between the church in the West and the East meant that interaction thereafter would be extremely limited for centuries to come.

While it may be going too far to call the Latin developed by early Christians, as Christine Mohrmann did, a *Sondersprache*, as though it were an almost entirely different language, nonetheless it was unquestionably a distinctive kind of discourse, and a great deal of it survives. Of all of the Latin texts that have come down to the present day from antiquity, it has been estimated that roughly 80 percent were written between 284 AD (when Diocletian, who divided the

81 For an analysis of “the rhetorical shape” of the *Peri Pascha*, see Stewart-Sykes, *Lamb’s High Feast*, 55ff.

82 On Chrysostom’s rhetoric, see among others Kelly, *Golden Mouth*; Pelikan, *Preaching of Chrysostom*; and Willey, *Chrysostom the Orator*. On his rhetorical training, see Hunter, “Libanius and John Chrysostom,” 129–135.

Empire into four parts, was declared emperor) and the middle of the sixth century AD, with the great majority of these texts authored by Christians.⁸³

One of the earliest and most articulate of the Latin church fathers was the North African Tertullian. The Carthaginian theologian was able to take full advantage of what must have been a thorough rhetorical education. His Latin prose, passionate and powerfully argued, more aphoristic than periodic, and filled with peculiar archaisms and provincial qualities, is decidedly unCiceronian, although he expresses his respect for the Roman rhetor in *Apologeticus* 11–16. In his address to his own soul, Tertullian describes it as unschooled and unpolished:

But I address you not as a soul which belches out wisdom, a soul shaped in the schools, exercised in the libraries, fed in the Athenian academies and porticos. I call on you as a soul that is simple and rough around the edges and idiosyncratic, such as they have who have only you, that very thing you are, entirely a product of the streets, the crossroads, the shipyards.⁸⁴

Ironically enough, it is unlikely that the forceful and antithetical language Tertullian uses to repudiate traditional study would be nearly so striking if it were completely unstudied.⁸⁵

The explicit debt to Cicero is clearer in the case of Minucius Felix, whose dialogue *Octavius* is written in Ciceronian style, and who quotes often from his philosophical works.⁸⁶ Like Minucius Felix and Tertullian, Lactantius also hailed from North Africa. A prominent teacher of rhetoric, eventually appointed advisor to Constantine, Lactantius was called *Cicero Christianus* by Pico della Mirandola because of the graceful elegance of his style, although some of his theological positions were deemed unorthodox.⁸⁷

Ambrose of Milan, one of the four Latin *doctores ecclesiae*, also benefited from a solid rhetorical education. He served as a government official before being precipitously launched (against his will) into a distinguished ecclesiastical career. His eloquence was literally legendary.⁸⁸ Ambrose knew Cicero well

83 Leonhardt, *Latin*, 87.

84 *De testimonio animae* 1 (CCSL 1,176).

85 For a rhetorical analysis of Tertullian's prose, see Sider, *Art of Tertullian*.

86 See Becker, *Octavius des Minucius Felix*.

87 Kendeffy, "Lactantius as Christian Cicero," 56–92.

88 A swarm of bees is supposed to have settled on Ambrose while still in the cradle, leaving behind on the infant's lips some honey, thus accounting for the storied sweetness of his eloquence. On Ambrose as a homiletician, see Dunn-Wilson, *Mirror for the Church*, 86ff. See also Dorothea, "Cicero and Saint Ambrose," 219–222.

and even produced a Christian version of *De officiis*, a set of ethical guidelines which Cicero had written for his son, away from home at school in Athens. Ambrose's *De officiis* was meant primarily for his spiritual sons, the clergy of Milan.⁸⁹

The influence of Cicero on the church father, Jerome, a contemporary of Ambrose, has often been remarked. In *Epist.* 22, Jerome relates a vision he had in which he saw himself haled before a heavenly court, accused of being a Ciceronian not a Christian (*Ciceronianus es, non Christianus*), and beaten.⁹⁰ Tellingly, it was his disdain for the *sermo incultus* of the Bible which had kept him returning to Cicero, even after his commitment to an ascetic way of life that renounced all the finer things of civilization. Though he spent much of his later life translating substantial parts of what was to become the Latin Vulgate from the Hebrew and the Greek, his deep grounding in a traditional Latin rhetorical education made it quite difficult for Jerome completely to abandon Cicero. Allusions and references to the Roman orator and other classical texts can be found in his later writings, despite the apparently firm repudiation implicit in his rhetorical question: "What does Cicero have to do with the Apostle [Paul]?"⁹¹ The Vulgate, with its neologisms borrowed from the Hebrew and the Greek, as well as its use of syntactical patterns unknown in classical Latin prose (Jerome believed that even the word order of the original Scriptures was divinely inspired), greatly influenced the development of what is often referred to as "Medieval Latin."

Significant as Cicero's influence was upon these early Latin church fathers, none owed a greater debt to him or played a greater role in the perpetuation of his influence than Augustine.⁹² After a thorough training in rhetoric in Carthage, the young African moved to Rome, where he became a professional rhetor, and later to Milan, where he was converted to Christianity after coming into contact with Ambrose. It was the bishop of Milan's mystical interpretation of the Scriptures that helped to convince Augustine that there was a deep truth to these "old writings" which he had before considered inept (*absurda*). If Cicero's rhetorical theory and example were important for the development of Augustine's extraordinary verbal gifts, it was as a transmitter of Platonic idealism that he played a central role in Augustine's spiritual conversion. A reading

89 See Colish, "Ambrose and Stoic Ethics."

90 *Ad Eustochium* (LCL 262,124–8).

91 Jerome cites eighteen of Cicero's orations. See Adkin, "Hieronymus Ciceronianus," 408–420. Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics*, remains a fundamental study.

92 See Testard, *Saint Augustin et Cicéron*, and Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 43ff.

of the *Hortentius*, a dialogue (now lost) of “a certain Cicero, whose tongue nearly everyone admired, but his heart not so much,” played a key role in transferring Augustine’s affections from worldly pursuits to God.⁹³

After his baptism in 387, Augustine returned to North Africa, where he became a priest and then a bishop, based in the town of Hippo. From here, he wielded an almost incalculable influence on his contemporaries and future generations, thanks to the power of his preaching, teaching, and correspondence. Even after his conversion, Augustine continued to appreciate Cicero for his unsurpassed eloquence in the Latin tongue, the value of his writings for ensuring the education and social maturation of the young, and his translation of Greek philosophical ideas into Latin, an invaluable literary project for which he felt Cicero deserved much credit.

Cicero’s rhetorical influence on Augustine is most clearly apparent in a treatise he wrote on Christian rhetoric entitled *De doctrina christiana*, a work that helped to inform the practice and character of Christian preaching for centuries thereafter.⁹⁴ The fourth book, written later than the first three, is devoted specifically to homiletics.⁹⁵ The work’s prologue features a *praemunitio* in which Augustine anticipates a critical objection: could not direct divine assistance suffice to guide a Christian’s speech, thus obviating the need for any sort of rhetorical training or expertise? The demonstration of something’s dispensability, Augustine counters, does not eliminate its potential value or utility. God could have saved mankind without the church and the Scriptures, but both were given to Christians for their benefit. Why abandon such divine gifts? So, too, with rhetoric. Using for an analogy an episode in the account in Exodus (12: 35) which relates how the Israelites were able to take along with them the riches of Egypt when they left on their long trek to the promised land, Augustine argues that this “spoiling of the Egyptians” set a precedent for Christians interested in adopting and adapting for new purposes and contexts the rhetorical tools and techniques so long associated with pagan Roman education.⁹⁶

93 *Conf.* 3.4.7 (LCL 26,100). Luther knew of the work. See his marginal notes on Augustine’s *Confessions* (WA 9.6).

94 Even though Augustine’s debt to Cicero in the work is clear, *De doctrina christiana* also bears the stamp of Augustine’s own inimitable genius, and scholars disagree as to how “Ciceronian” or “unCiceronian” the final amalgamation of classical and Christian in the treatise may be.

95 See Baldwin, “St. Augustine on Preaching,” 187–203. On the conceptual background of the work, see Van Fleteren, “Augustine, Neoplatonism, and Liberal Arts,” 14–24.

96 On the understanding of *spolia* in early Christian Rome, see Hansen, *Eloquence of Appropriation*.

In *De doctrina christiana* Augustine does not offer the reader a detailed summary of the rules of rhetoric, because they are readily available elsewhere. And rules for speaking, after all, are developed after the fact and have but limited value for any but the young. Even babies readily learn to speak, demonstrating how little need of rules there really is for this natural process to take place. Imitation of the best models occupies a central role for the development of Augustine's Christian orators, but there will be a new, scriptural canon, and exegesis will play a central role for teaching and preaching. The tools of the *ars grammatica* and patient attention to explicating a text sequentially, therefore, are indispensable for the practice of sacred rhetoric as envisioned by Augustine. Devoted as they are to the art of biblical exegesis, the first three books of *De doctrina christiana* set the stage for the discussion of eloquence or style in the final book: wisdom is of greater fundamental importance than eloquence for Christian teaching and preaching. And the Christian will speak more or less wisely to the extent that he has learned how to look into the heart of the Holy Scriptures with his own heart to determine their sense. Among the criteria for style, clarity will be paramount, more so than ornament (*De doctrina christiana* 4.9.23f.).⁹⁷ The speaker's *ethos* is just as critical a consideration in Augustine's basilica as it was in Cicero's forum. There is no place for hypocrisy in the church, even though it is possible that a wicked man could write a pious sermon which would be effective if delivered by someone else. The preacher, finally, must be a man of prayer; eloquence is of secondary importance, although not necessarily unhelpful.

One important practical regard in which Augustine's rhetorical teachings differ from those of Cicero is that he consistently envisions their application at a popular level; he is not thinking primarily of the elites who might benefit from such instruction. And insofar as much of Christian discourse in the Latin West, including Augustine's own, was centered more on instruction than persuasion or entertainment, it is not surprising that the simple style, *sermo humilis*, or as it was sometimes called *sermo piscatorius* ("fishermen's talk"),⁹⁸ became so very popular in the Christian centuries immediately following Augustine.⁹⁹

97 Augustine finds examples for all three classical levels of style in the Bible (*De doctrina christiana* 4.20.42ff.). Each has its proper place. *Dictio submissa*, simple and devoid of ornament, is best employed for explaining difficulties, especially at the beginning of a discourse. The middle style (*dictio temperata*) is euphonious and adorned with figures, designed to please the ear. *Dictio grandis* employs *suavitas* to great advantage to persuade the hearts of the listeners. Conversion involves moving the will and not just the mind.

98 Probably in light of the vocation of some of the very first followers of Jesus, like Peter.

99 See Auerbach, "*Sermo humilis*," 37ff.

The most common public speech activity in Augustine's town of Hippo and others at this time was the sermon or the homily.¹⁰⁰ Both the Latin *sermo* and Greek *homilia* are words used to designate a kind of discourse that is closer to the common Cynic-Stoic diatribe¹⁰¹ than to a Ciceronian oration, more indebted to Horace's conversational muse than to Calliope, the muse of epic poetry.¹⁰² Homilies were informal, loosely connected talks aimed at a general audience. As in the Jewish synagogue where readings from the Law and the Prophets served as the basis for exegesis, in Christian churches, too, homilies were often based on readings drawn from the Bible, which now included the New Testament. These constituted a regular part of religious services and often were related directly or indirectly to the festivals and seasons of the church year.

Augustine himself preached frequently, without extensive notes, and sometimes even without the biblical text before him. Hundreds of his sermons survive. Shorthand experts (*notarii*) took down his sermons, which were then later transcribed by *librarii*. The congregation in Hippo responded emotionally and vocally to Augustine's preaching, with sighs or weeping or applause; sometimes they even joined in with the speaker and helped to complete familiar Scripture quotations. The delivery of the sermon would regularly follow the reading of the Gospel. It was common practice to base the sermon on one of the Scripture readings designated for the day which the preacher prepared beforehand, although we know that Augustine was perfectly capable of extemporizing upon a different text than the one for which he had prepared.¹⁰³

By way of illustration, let us examine the opening lines of a sermon of Augustine on Luke 7: 36–50 (PL 38, 595–602). Augustine begins straightforwardly with a reference to the assigned Gospel reading: "Believing that God wishes me to talk about what we were admonished by the oracles of the Lord from the divine readings, we offer to your love, with his help, a sermon on the

100 For distinctions between the two, see Mohrmann, "*Praedicare-Tractare-Sermo*," 63–72.

101 The relationship between the Pauline sermon and the Cynic-Stoic diatribe was the subject of Rudolf Bultmann's doctoral dissertation, published in 1910.

102 See Freudenburg, *Walking Muse*. There were Christian orations, but these were most often delivered in royal courts or at important church councils.

103 "On one occasion the precentor had misunderstood the number of the psalm and had sung Psalm cxxxviii, with its twenty-four verses, instead of the short one which Augustine had chosen; Augustine took up the theme of the psalm that had actually been sung. 'I had prepared myself for one of the short psalms,' he said on this occasion, 'and had asked for it to be sung, but the lector seems to have been somewhat confused, and sang a different one. In these circumstances I prefer to conform to the error of the lector and the will of God rather than to follow my own' (Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, 414–415).

forgiveness of sins.” He addresses the listeners directly here and in the following lines, involving them in the speech activity, reminding them that they had listened intently when the Gospel was being read and that as the story had unfolded, “you saw, not with your physical eyes, but in your mind, the Lord Jesus Christ reclining at dinner in the house of a Pharisee and not declining the invitation. You also saw a woman with a reputation in the city, and not a good one either. She was a sinner.” The *narratio* here is simple and vivid, presented in language even the uneducated could understand. As the preacher warms to his task, figures, especially those of paradox and paronomasia, begin to appear with great frequency:

Even though she was not invited, she burst into the dining room where her doctor was reclining, and she sought healing with reverent irreverence. She burst in as one who was unsuitable for a dinner party, but she was suitable for a blessing.... First she shed tears, the blood of her heart, and washed the feet of the Lord in an obedient act of confession. She wiped his feet with her hair, she kissed them, she anointed them. She was speaking a silent language: she was not preaching a sermon, but she was showing her devotion.

With “reverent irreverence” (*pia impudentia*) the sinful woman seeks healing from Jesus. Her manners are “unsuitable” for the context, Augustine admits, as she interrupted the occasion, but she is nonetheless “suitable” for a blessing. The tears with which the woman washes Jesus’s feet are interpreted in a powerful metaphor as “the blood of her heart.” Even though she has said not a word, Augustine declares in a striking paradox that she was speaking silently (*tacita loquebatur*).¹⁰⁴ Augustine’s exegesis of the first verse ends with a ringing rhyme: *non sermonem promebat, sed devotionem ostendebat* (“she was not producing a speech, but rather was showing the extent of her devotion”).

Cicero’s influence continued to be felt in late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, often indirectly through commentaries such as Marius Victorinus’s commentary on *De inventione*, rhetorical handbooks like those of Fortunatianus and Julius Victor, and the sections on rhetoric in encyclopedias of the liberal arts.¹⁰⁵ One of the most influential of these encyclopedic treatments was written in prose and verse by a later contemporary of Augustine, Martianus Capella, and bears the fanciful title: *On the Marriage of Philology and*

104 Cicero sets the same two verbal ideas in strongly contrastive opposition in *Cat.* 1.8.21.

105 See the overview by MacCormack, “Cicero in Late Antiquity,” 251–305.

Mercury.¹⁰⁶ According to Martianus, there are seven liberal arts, including rhetoric.¹⁰⁷ In the sixth century Cassiodorus, author of the *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*, praises Cicero as the “outstanding light of Latin eloquence.”¹⁰⁸ Like Ambrose before him, who suggested that Jeremiah and Plato had met in Egypt, Cassiodorus was eager to attribute the commonalities between pagan philosophy and Christian truth to the influence of the latter upon the former. Boethius, a contemporary of Cassiodorus, was heavily influenced by Cicero. His *Consolation of Philosophy* was one of the most widely read books in the Middle Ages.¹⁰⁹ Another educational catalogue (seventh century), Isidore of Seville’s influential *Etymologiae*, depends heavily on Cassiodorus.¹¹⁰

As the Roman Empire in the West collapsed there were catastrophic ramifications for the works of Cicero and other pagan authors. Many of these, like Cicero’s *Hortensius*, were lost at this time forever. Pope Gregory the Great “was bitterly opposed to classical learning,” maintaining that “the colloquial and ungrammatical Latin he spoke and wrote was the only suitable language for Christian teaching.”¹¹¹ In Anglo-Saxon England, Aldhelm quotes Cicero a total of three times in all of his Latin prose writings.¹¹²

Still, despite all of the dramatic changes, there were plenty of forces at work that ensured the preservation of parts of the classical tradition, including much of Cicero, and made for a great degree of cultural continuity during late antiquity and the Middle Ages. Let us remember that, distinctively “medieval” as it certainly is, the footprint of the Gothic cathedral is based on the ancient Roman basilica. Just so, it could be argued, as it is adapted to the requirements of Christian prose, Ciceronian rhetoric represents a distinct, but not uncomplicated, line of continuity linking Greco-Roman antiquity with the Carolingian

106 C.S. Lewis found the work bizarre: “for this universe, which has produced the bee-orchid and the giraffe, has produced nothing stranger than Martianus Capella”; as quoted in Teeuwen, “Martianus Capella’s *De Nuptiis*,” 185.

107 Varro counted nine liberal arts, including architecture. Notions as to how many liberal arts there were varied considerably in antiquity (Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 13).

108 On the complicated question of how the relationship between secular and religious literature was regarded by Cassiodorus, see Cameron, “Cassiodorus Deflated,” 183–186.

109 See Patch, *Tradition of Boethius*, on his importance for the medieval literary and philosophical tradition. Claassen, *Displaced Persons*, explores Boethius’ affinities with earlier exiles, including Cicero.

110 See Barney, et al., *Etymologies of Isidore*.

111 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 7.

112 Ibid., 37.

Renaissance, the development of the medieval universities in the twelfth century, Humanism, and the Reformation.¹¹³

Thanks to the tireless efforts of itinerant Irish monks, followed by the pedagogical work of the Venerable Bede in England, Alcuin (advisor to Charlemagne), and other curriculum authorities in the Carolingian period, there was no question, as it turned out, that Latin would continue to be taught in monastic and cathedral schools throughout the Middle Ages, even after the rise of the vernacular languages.¹¹⁴ As a predominately second language, Latin underwent some significant change in the Middle Ages. The Vulgate became a literary norm, not an embarrassing stylistic anomaly.¹¹⁵ The standards for Latin prose began to change. Latin poetry lost its quantitative character, and accentual, end-rhymed verse was in vogue. Despite all of these dramatic linguistic developments, however, Latin always remained Latin.¹¹⁶

One reason for this continuity, no doubt, was that throughout the Middle Ages, the study of grammar continued to focus on ancient Latin poets, foregrounding the study of the figures and tropes so necessary for rhetorical ornament.¹¹⁷ And wherever Latin prose was taught, the figure of Cicero still loomed large as a preeminent model. For Lupus Servatus of Ferrières and many other monastic scribes and scholars, the name of Cicero continued to command respect as one of the great *auctores* of antiquity.¹¹⁸ Aelred of Rievaulx was inspired by Cicero's dialogue on friendship to construct his own Christian dialogue, *De spirituali amicitia*.¹¹⁹ Dante quotes Cicero around fifty times in

113 Witt, *Two Latin Cultures*, discovers roots of the Renaissance in early medieval Italy. On the idea of a Carolingian Renaissance before *the* Renaissance, see Trompf, "Concept of the Carolingian Renaissance."

114 Wallach, *Alcuin and Charlemagne*, puts the advisor's name before the emperor's in the title of his book. It is hard to overstate Alcuin's importance for the momentous intellectual changes of the period.

115 It was still possible in the eleventh century for the language of the Latin Gospels to be described derogatively as *durum*, *insipidum*, *infantilem* (Peter of Blois, *Ep.* 76). For a comparative analysis of the language of the Vulgate Psalter with Cicero's style, see Jepson, "The Latinity of the Vulgate Psalter."

116 On the diversity of Latin prose over the centuries, see the essays collected in Reinhardt, et al., *Language of Latin Prose*.

117 On the close connection between the study of grammar and Christian piety in late antiquity, see Chin, *Grammar and Christianity*.

118 See Noble, "Lupus of Ferrières," 232–250.

119 See Hyatte, *Arts of Friendship*, 43–86, on Aelred's contributions to medieval notions of friendship.

his works.¹²⁰ His teacher, Brunetto Latini, translated Cicero's speeches into Italian.¹²¹

While grammar, "the first of arts" as Erchanbert of Freising terms it in his commentary on Donatus, occupied more pedagogical attention than rhetoric in the early Middle Ages,¹²² *Ad Herennium* began to gain renewed attention in the twelfth century as a manual for instruction in letter writing (*ars dictaminis*).¹²³ The Apostle Paul's epistles might have been selected as models for imitation, but experts like Alberic of Monte Cassino (author of *Flores rhetorici*) preferred to proceed more systematically. *Ad Herennium* provided a structural paradigm that, when modified for epistolary writing, could easily be mastered and applied to letters. The apt use of ornaments was also important for letters to have their desired persuasive effect. Specialization began to occur. A technical development of the *ars dictaminis* with special application for professional letter writers emerged (*ars notaria*).¹²⁴

Preaching began to be taught more systematically (*ars praedicandi*) in the later Middle Ages, and there are hundreds of treatises devoted to the subject that date to this period. Rather than imitating the homiletical models of the church fathers, like Gregory the Great, or even simply rereading the church fathers' sermons in church, as was frequently done earlier, Franciscans, Dominicans, and others began to devote more time and effort to refining the art of preaching.¹²⁵ As the sermon assumed greater importance in worship, elevated pulpits (higher and more impressive than the ancient *ambo*) came to

120 Hightet, *Classical Tradition*, 79. Dante was familiar with Cicero's *De amicitia*, *De senectute*, *De finibus*, and *De officiis*.

121 Chaucer made "The Dream of Scipio" (from Cicero's *De republica*) the basis for *The Parliament of Fowls*. See Koff, "Dreaming the Dream of Scipio," 65–84, and Shonk, "For I Hadde Red," 85–122.

122 Leonhardt, *Latin*, 162.

123 Both *De inventione* and *Ad Herennium* "received vastly greater attention during the medieval period, than their merits or their modern following suggest they deserve" (Ward, "What the Middle Ages Missed," 311). A bizarre work of the twelfth century, Anselm of Besate's *Rhetorimachia*, makes extensive use of *De inventione* and *Ad Herennium* to construct arguments in a dispute involving imagined crimes; see Resnick, "Anselm the Peripatetic," 1–12.

124 Another spin-off was the art of secular speechmaking, the *ars arengandi* (from which the English word "harangue" is derived), especially in thirteenth-century Italy where an active civic discourse in the northern city-states created new interest in Cicero.

125 On works about preaching from the later Middle Ages, see O'Malley, "Form, Content, and Influence." *Ad Herennium* served as a rich resource for preachers (see, for example, Richard Thetford's *Ars dilatandi sermones*; c. 1245). On the influence of classical rhetoric on medieval homiletic theory, see Caplan, "Classical Rhetoric," 73–96.

be featured prominently in church architecture. Departing from the model of the exegetical homily, preachers increasingly began to favor thematic sermons, often highly allegorical and even fanciful.¹²⁶

In the later Middle Ages, with the rise of the universities in Italy, France, and England, we see an increased emphasis on logic and dialectic in the curriculum and a growing inclination to view rhetoric and dialectic as diametrically opposed to each other.¹²⁷ At the University of Paris, rhetoric was only considered suitable as a subject for lectures outside the standard coursework. Dialecticians often demonstrated a palpable lack of interest in stylistic effect.¹²⁸ In the eleventh century, Onulf of Speyer had advised against the use of figures of speech altogether; in the next century, in his *Anticlaudianus*, Alan of Lille reduced the role of rhetoric to “adornment” and dismissed it as specious.¹²⁹ In much of the Latin prose emerging from the scholastic milieu of the later Middle Ages one detects, in general, a preponderant emphasis on what is to be thought, as opposed to how it can be best said. Sentences are short and to the point; less attention is paid to acoustical effects, including the rhythmical *clausulae*. Verbal ornament is often all but absent.

Nowhere is this more conspicuously evident than in the prose of the “angelic doctor,” Thomas Aquinas. Here is a sample (*Summa Theologica* 1.1.1.9; Gilby, vol. 1, 32–4):

Videtur quod sacra Scriptura non debeat uti metaphoris. Illud enim quod est proprium infimae doctrinae, non videtur competere huic scientiae, quae inter alias tenet locum supremum, ut iam dictum est. Procedere autem per similitudines varias et repraesentationes, est proprium poeticae, quae est infima inter omnes doctrinas. Ergo huiusmodi similitudinibus uti, non est conveniens huic scientiae.... Responsio: Dicendum quod conveniens est sacrae Scripturae divina et spiritualia sub similitudine corporalium tradere. Deus enim omnibus providet secundum quod competit eorum naturae. Est autem naturale homini ut per sensibilia ad intelligibilia veniat, quia omnis

126 See Leroux, *Luther's Rhetoric*, 219. On thematic sermons (subdivided into “thematic-doctrinal” and “thematic-figurative”), see Kiessling, *Early Sermons of Luther*, 27–29.

127 It was a work of Cicero, the *Topica*, along with a widely read commentary by Boethius, that played a foundational role in the development of scholasticism.

128 “Delight” was not considered by Boethius and others to be one of the aims of rhetoric; see Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 200–203.

129 Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 218. On the *Ars praedicandi* of Alan, see the introduction of Evans to her translation. On the “plan of arrangement for sermons” in the late medieval *Ars praedicandi*, see Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, 331.

nostra cognitio a sensu initium habet. Unde convenienter in sacra Scriptura traduntur nobis spiritualia sub metaphoris corporalium....

It seems that Holy Scripture ought not to use metaphors. For that which is appropriate for lowly teaching does not seem compatible with this knowledge which holds the highest place among others, as it is now said. But to proceed by using a variety of likenesses and representations is a mode appropriate for poetry, which is the least of all the disciplines. So to make use of likenesses of this sort does not fit with this knowledge. ... My response: it must be said that it is fitting to pass down divine and spiritual truths of Holy Scripture in the likeness of bodily things. For God provides for all things in accordance with what is fitting for their nature. But it is natural for man that he should arrive at what can be understood through what can be perceived by the senses, because our entire cognitive faculty begins with the senses. For which reason it is fitting that in the Holy Scripture spiritual truths are handed down to us through the use of physical metaphors....

The compelling nature of Aquinas's thought itself is what propels his words forward so powerfully; the language serves as an efficient vehicle for the thought it conveys, but little more. The arguments proceed in a predictable, even formulaic pattern. The sentences are relatively short, and most of the subordinate clauses are relative clauses. The syntax is uncomplicated. There are few figures, if any, and no metaphor—not even in a discussion of metaphor! Despite its failure to conform to Ciceronian norms of eloquence, the unadorned Latin prose of Thomas can, nonetheless, be said to have served its rhetorical purpose well. It is clear, to the point, and, most important, entirely appropriate for the context in which Aquinas wishes to use it.¹³⁰

Renaissance Humanism

While it is a mistake to consider the entire medieval period in western Europe as the “Dark Ages,” the designation might well be applied to the 1300s, a century of seemingly constant war between France and England, when an awful plague ravaged entire urban populations, and social unrest increased. The bustling Roman forum where Cicero had once spoken was now a meadow filled with ruins where cattle grazed; the population of the once mighty city

130 On Aquinas's judgment and use of Cicero, see Rand, *Cicero in the Courtroom*.

had shrunk to that of a small town, its citizens living huddled near the Tiber River; and the papal see was off in France in exile in the city of Avignon. And yet it is this century to which Renaissance humanism, with its single-minded dedication to the recovery of the humanities (*studia humaniora*), traces many of its beginnings.

We shall train our focus here almost exclusively on the important role played by Cicero (especially his rhetorical theory and his oratorical example), in the dramatic story of how the humanists set about to recover the language and literature of the ancient Greeks and Romans in Italy and elsewhere during this period.¹³¹ Cicero was accorded a kind of respect we can now scarcely imagine. He was considered not only a great luminary (*lumen*), but assigned a status something akin to that of a divinity (*numen*). His writings had an enormous influence upon the development of a distinctive neo-Latin prose style that deliberately vaulted over more immediate medieval Latin models and returned directly to classical sources (*ad fontes*) for inspiration.

The term “Italian Renaissance” is used to describe a phenomenon beginning in Italy in the later thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries, including the achievements of visual artists and architects, that sought inspiration in ancient Greco-Roman cultural models.¹³² “Renaissance humanism” is a term with a more restricted field of reference. The course of studies known as *studia humanitatis* was as “important for what it excluded as for what it contained.”¹³³ Its focus was not on the “arts” in general, but only on “letters,” that is to say, grammar, rhetoric, philosophy, history, and poetry. “Humanism,” as narrowly defined by Paul Oskar Kristeller, is “a phase ... in the rhetorical tradition in western culture,” or, to borrow the description of Rudolf Pfeiffer, “the creation of a new method of approach to the literary heritage of the ancients.”¹³⁴

This does not mean that humanism was a purely scholarly movement, an antiquarian undertaking to recover a literary past for its own sake, or only a matter of refining contemporary aesthetic sensitivities. It was, in fact, a quest for truth itself that animated Renaissance humanism. This truth, to the humanists’ way of thinking, was not to be found primarily in the natural world, a

131 On Cicero’s profound influence on two of the most important humanists, Petrarch and Erasmus, see, among others, Rüegg, *Cicero und der Humanismus*. The essays collected in Cox and Ward, *Rhetoric of Cicero*, illustrate the range and depth of Cicero’s influence on rhetoric in the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance.

132 On the possible influence of French “admiration of classical models” (especially at Chartres) on Italian humanism, see Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 227.

133 Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, 122.

134 Kristeller, *Classics and Renaissance Thought*, 9–11, and Pfeiffer, *Classical Scholarship*, 3.

key presupposition of modern scientific thinking, but in the world of language and literature. The humanists imagined themselves to be citizens of “the republic of letters.” With its deep respect for the authority of a select linguistic and literary past (comprised of both pagan and Christian *auctores*), the world-view of the Renaissance humanists more closely resembled that of medieval forebears such as Isidore and John of Salisbury than that of later thinkers such as Francis Bacon and Galileo, who devoted their studies to the observation of the world around them.

Whether they were north or south of the Alps, whether their names are more often today associated with the Renaissance or the Reformation, humanists of the early modern period were united in their shared conviction in the power and importance of language. Language was the most critical area of human study, to their way of thinking, not merely a conveniently empty vessel ready to be filled with content; it was much more, in other words, than an arbitrary, interchangeable, dispensable vehicle that serves only to fulfill the needs of human communication, but never shapes it.¹³⁵ In fact, the humanists saw language as an integrally formative part of human culture, a divine gift, not just an ancillary or a tool. What is said cannot really be separated from how it is said. This perspective informed not only the humanists’ linguistic and literary work in the recovery of ancient classical Greco-Roman texts but also their study of the Bible and theology. According to the first chapter of Genesis (1: 3), language is how God brought the world into being: “And God said, ‘Let there be light: and there was light.’” The same point is made in the first verse of the Gospel of John: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The only begotten Son of the Father, “full of grace and truth,” was the Word that “was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1: 14). The church, as Luther described it, is not a *fedderhaws*, but a *mundhaws* (not a “pen-house,” but a “mouth-house”; WA 10.1.2,48), because it is through speaking to each other in “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (Eph. 5: 19), that the most important work of the church is done, whether it be in the form of praying, teaching, preaching, confession, or worship. Theology is itself, of course, a variety of language, which it is impossible to practice without involving actively both halves of that word’s formulation: *theos* and *logos*. The existence of God may not depend upon human language, but theology necessarily does. Even such nonverbal practices and experiences as meditation, divine visions,

135 On the importance of eloquence insofar as it served as a common denominator for a wide range of humanists and the diverse interests they pursued, see Gray, “Renaissance Humanism,” 497–514.

or the products of apophatic theology are nearly impossible to describe or to share with others without using the language of words.¹³⁶

In light of these priorities, it is easier to appreciate the humanists' stringent critique of the preponderant importance that the study and use of logic and dialectic had assumed in the late medieval curriculum at the expense of rhetoric. The latter served best, humanists were convinced, to educate a well-rounded man who would not only be a thoughtful Christian, but could also serve others with his words, spoken and written, as an active and effective citizen. Hence their deep disdain for the purely functional, "barbarous" Latin of scholastic theologians. While the degree of acrimony which characterizes humanists' discussions of this subject may startle modern readers, it should also serve to give us some idea of the seriousness with which they took issues of language and style. Lorenzo Valla, for instance, describes "monastic Latin" as the language spoken by "a stupid, fat, and heavy clergyman who spews forth these opinions and these words while intoxicated by the heat of wine."¹³⁷ That there was a degree of exaggeration and hyperbole in the self-conscious distinctions humanists made between themselves and their medieval precursors is no doubt true, but there can be little question that their ears were exquisitely attuned to the sound of Latin in a way that we can scarcely imagine today. Petrarch declares of himself, even before he had reached the age of understanding: "At that age I was able to understand nothing, but it was a certain sweetness and the sound of the words alone that captivated me."¹³⁸

The exciting rebirth of interest in the ancient Greek and Roman classics in the fourteenth century owed much to Greek scholars who came to visit (and stay) in Italy, bringing their erudition along with them. This trend continued and accelerated after the capitulation of Byzantium to the Turks in 1453. As the knowledge and study of Greek language and literature had been so nearly abandoned in the West during the Middle Ages, the recovery of the works of ancient Greek authors such as Aristotle, Homer, and the Attic tragedians is often featured centrally in retellings of the story of Renaissance Humanism, with the restoration of classical Latin relegated to something like second place. In many ways, however, Latin was of more pervasive significance for the humanists than Greek, if only because it continued to be the language which most of

136 Gerhard Ebeling calls Luther himself "a language event." For this discussion, see my "Bach's Latin," 293–294.

137 Original in Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 167.

138 Original in Pfeiffer, *Classical Scholarship*, 5.

them used to write about, among other subjects, ancient Greek language and literature.¹³⁹

One of the first and most important of these Italian humanists was Francesco Petrarca, who wrote Latin in the classical style and gained a wide readership for his works. His single-minded determination to recapture the splendor of the Greco-Roman literary past for a contemporary Christian society was not regarded (as it might well have been) as an eccentric quirk by his contemporaries; he was crowned the first poet laureate in 1341 in Rome. Even though his father wanted him to study law, Petrarch was irresistibly drawn to the classics, immersing himself in Cicero and the Latin poets, infuriating his father in the process. Petrarch once related (*Seniles* 16.1) that his father actually threw all his books into a fire as though they were heretical writings. Seeing his son's sorrowful reaction, he plucked two belatedly from the flames and handed them, badly burned though they were, back to Petrarch. In his right hand was a volume of Virgil's poetry, in his left Cicero's *Rhetorica* (most likely *De inventione* and *Ad Herennium*), the two indispensable masters of Latin verse and prose respectively.¹⁴⁰

Despite his intense devotion to the classical authors of Greece and Rome, Petrarch remained a devout Christian his entire life, spending the last years of his life in contemplative retirement. One of his later works, the *Secretum*, is an extensive personal dialogue with Saint Augustine. At the same time, Petrarch's devotion to early church fathers such as Ambrose, Augustine, and Jerome did not prevent him from sharply criticizing late medieval theologians, "a set of dialecticians," as he describes them in a letter to Boccaccio of 1364, "who are not only ignorant but demented. Like a black army of ants from some old rotten oak, they swarm forth from their hiding places and devastate the fields of sound learning." Petrarch had little use in particular for religious types "who scorn Marcus Tullius Cicero, the bright sun of eloquence." These and other "monstrous" pedants may wear "religious garb," but they are "most profane in heart and conduct."¹⁴¹

139 A much larger number of Latin texts, whether in poetry and prose, has come down to us from the early modern period than from all of antiquity. As Leonhardt has observed (*Latin*, 2–3): "the quantity of post-Roman texts is so extensive that it exceeds the total of all extant classical Latin texts by a factor of ten thousand."

140 Feo, "Petrarca e Cicerone," 20. Petrarch describes Virgil and Cicero elsewhere (*Trionfo della Fama* 3.21) as "the eyes of our language" (*gli occhi della nostra lingua*); see Pfeiffer, *Classical Scholarship*, 6.

141 Transl. in Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 309.

Like other humanists, Petrarch devoted himself to recovering as many manuscripts of the classics that he could find. Among his discoveries were Cicero's *Pro Archia* (in Liège in 1333) and, even more significant, Cicero's letters to Atticus, which Petrarch found in the cathedral library in Verona in 1345.¹⁴² Indeed, it was the discovery of these letters that some have pointed to as a decisive starting point for the entire Italian Renaissance. They were a genuine revelation; for Petrarch and other humanists it was as if they could now hear Cicero as a real human being, speaking directly to them, as it were, across the ages. Whether touching on personal issues or momentous matters of state, whether candid and self-absorbed (*epistola ... non erubescit*; "a letter does not blush") or reflective and philosophical, Cicero's letters were invariably limpid and elegant and interesting, and they quickly began to be regarded as models for humanist epistolary style.¹⁴³

We may get some idea of the intensity of Petrarch's intellectual and spiritual relationship with Cicero if we consider two letters he wrote to his beloved, idealized Latin orator. The image of this "great father of Roman eloquence" had been somewhat tarnished in Petrarch's eyes after he discovered from reading his correspondence that Cicero was deeply involved as a partisan in the politics of his day, and that his "spirit ever restless and perturbed" had led him to pursue a dangerous way of life that resulted in "a death that was unseemly for a philosopher to die." In the second of these letters, the Italian humanist begs the illustrious orator for forgiveness if he has been offended by Petrarch's criticism of the way he ended his career. It was Cicero's life which had come in for his censure in his first letter, not his mind or his tongue; these latter still fill Petrarch with admiration and amazement. He reminds Cicero of the value of truth-telling, and he assures his hero that despite his criticisms of him, Petrarch still regards Cicero as "the leader who marshals us." It is Cicero's "light that illumines the path before us." True, some of his books have now gone missing (like the *De gloria* which Petrarch lent to a friend who promised to take good care of it, but did not). Worse than that, the attention that Cicero deserves to receive is lacking, because Petrarch's contemporaries have "slow and dull" minds and are more interested in money than elevated thought and language. The letter concludes on a melancholy note: "Trust me, Cicero, if you were to hear of our

142 On the importance of *Pro Archia*, even though one of Cicero's shorter speeches, for the development of the concept of *studia humanitatis*, see McLaughlin, "Petrarch and Cicero," 25.

143 See Eden, *Renaissance Rediscovery of Intimacy*, especially Chapter 2: "A Rhetoric and Hermeneutics of Intimacy in Petrarch's *Familiares*."

condition today you would be moved to tears, in whatever circle of heaven above or Erebus below you may be dwelling. Farewell, forever.”¹⁴⁴

If Petrarch had a more contemplative nature, befitting a scholar and author who lived so intensely in the world of books, ideas, and words, the same could not be said of Coluccio Salutati, the powerful chancellor of Florence and a “father figure” for other humanists.¹⁴⁵ Nor could it be said of Leonardo Bruni, Salutati’s pupil, who succeeded him as chancellor and served as secretary for four popes. For Salutati, Bruni, and other activist humanists, the combination of wisdom and eloquence with politics, that distinctive blending of the contemplative and active life Petrarch had discovered in the letters of his hero Cicero, was quite gratifying. Thanks to the chancellor’s own influence and the example set by the city of Florence in the quattrocento, humanist ideals and principles spread rapidly throughout much of the rest of northern Italy, and there was a sudden and urgent demand for humanist teachers and suitable books for them to use for instructing others.

Other humanists joined Petrarch in the quest for ancient manuscripts of Cicero. At Salutati’s request a search for Cicero’s letters was undertaken in Vercelli, which resulted in the discovery of Cicero’s *Epistulae ad familiares*.¹⁴⁶ The most indefatigable of the humanists who devoted themselves to tracking down manuscripts was Poggio Bracciolini. On a trip to France, he found a manuscript in Cluny which contained many of Cicero’s speeches. (A complete copy of Quintilian followed, discovered in Sankt Gallen.) In 1417 Poggio discovered more speeches of Cicero on a trip to Germany.¹⁴⁷ A few years later, in Lodi, where he was bishop, Gerardo Landriani found manuscripts of Cicero’s *De oratore*, *Orator*, and *Brutus*.

While some of the humanists could be described as passionate amateurs whose approach to the study of the past more closely resembled that of the present day antiquarian than the professional philologist, others were quite capable of achieving a high degree of scholarly rigor and critical acumen. Conspicuous among these was Lorenzo Valla, a brilliant Greek and Latin scholar, holder of a chair of rhetoric in Rome, who was eventually named papal secretary and member of the Curia. One of the most convincing displays of the

144 Translations in Robinson, *Petrarch*, 250–252.

145 Celenza, “Salutati’s View of the History of Latin,” 5. For an overview of his life, see Witt, *Hercules at the Crossroads*.

146 Boccaccio gave Petrarch a copy of Cicero’s *Pro Cluentio* which he had copied himself from a manuscript found in Monte Cassino (Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, 131).

147 On Poggio’s discovery of a manuscript of Lucretius probably in Fulda, see the opening pages of Greenblatt, *The Swerve*.

actual power of humanist scholarship was his demonstration in 1440 that the document that had helped to support papal claims to secular as well as spiritual power, the so-called Donation of Constantine, was actually a fabrication of the Carolingian period.¹⁴⁸ He even dared to emend the Vulgate, based on his study of the Greek original and patristic sources.

With the introduction of the printing press and the increased use of paper rather than the durable but expensive parchment regularly used for book production during the Middle Ages, it suddenly became much cheaper to make and to own books. Cicero, in particular, benefited from the coincidence of this new technology with the increased interest in ancient classical authors. This becomes clear upon scanning a list of the very first books to be printed after the establishment of the printing press in Germany (Mainz; c. 1455). Cicero's works were among the first books to be printed, after the Bible. By 1500, over three hundred editions of his works had been published. The first printed book in Italy was Cicero's *De oratore*, produced in the monastery of Subiaco in 1465 by two German monks, Sweynheym and Pannartz. A printed edition of *Epistulae ad familiares* soon followed. *De oratore*, *Brutus*, and *Orator* appeared four years later in 1469 in Rome, where the *Philippics* were published a year later. In the same year, *De inventione*, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and Cicero's epistles were published by Nicolaus Jenson's press in Venice. Over thirty of Cicero's speeches were printed in Rome in 1472. By the time the first printed editions of ancient Greek rhetorical works began to be published, many of Cicero's works had already been in print and in circulation for a quarter of a century.¹⁴⁹

Perhaps the single most striking piece of evidence for Cicero's supreme standing in the eyes of the Italian humanists is the development of the phenomenon of "Ciceronianism." All of the humanists, to be sure, could be described as "Ciceronian" in a general sense. Without exception, they rejected the kinds of Latin used in the Vulgate or favored by the scholastic theologians of the later Middle Ages and instead promoted the principles of classical Latin prose, with its distinctive grammar (e.g., accusative and infinitive in indirect discourse; subordinate purpose clauses with *ut* and the subjunctive mood to express purpose instead of infinitives; "bare cases" instead of prepositions)

148 Valla also voiced suspicions about the authenticity of the correspondence between St. Paul and Seneca.

149 Aldus Manutius in Venice produced an edition of Demosthenes in 1504 and of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* in 1508 (a Latin translation had appeared much earlier). The production of Latin books preceded Greek, due in part to the difficulties printers encountered as they tried to develop a font that would work for Greek characters. On the Aldine press and its many printing successes, see Lowry, *World of Aldus Manutius*.

and stylistics (e.g., long periodic sentences) as taught and exemplified by Cicero.¹⁵⁰ But the devotion of the early humanists to restoring Ciceronian Latin did not prevent them from borrowing from other ancient authors and pursuing a somewhat eclectic Latin prose style that privileged Cicero, although not exclusively so. A good example of this balanced approach is Lorenzo Valla's *Elegantiae linguae latinae*, first printed in 1471, and an instant success. "Elegance" may not be the best translation for *elegantia*, if it is taken to mean something like "daintiness or foppishness."¹⁵¹ The Latin word refers to verbal refinement and apt expressiveness, and Caesar, whom Valla considered to have written *latinissime*, is one of his models.¹⁵² Valla preferred Quintilian to Cicero, but this did little to dampen the general enthusiasm for Cicero, who was, after all, Quintilian's ideal.¹⁵³ In the decades following its initial publication, Valla's treatise went through dozens of editions.¹⁵⁴

With some of the humanists, however, devotion to Cicero as *the* model for contemporary Latin prose came to verge on the fanatical. This was especially the case with the Venetian Pietro Bembo as well as other humanists connected with the Roman Curia in the first part of the sixteenth century. They dedicated themselves with remarkable fervor to making sure that Cicero would be the sole source for their own Latinity. Some went so far as to take an oath never to use a word or sentence construction not employed by Cicero and to read nothing but Cicero for five years. Cardinal Bembo advised against reading the epistles of St. Paul too carefully because of their defective literary style. He even tried

150 Palmer, *Latin Language*, 125.

151 See the discussion in Eklund, *Literature and Moral Economy*, 12–14.

152 On the regard of Valla and other humanists for Caesar, see McLaughlin, "Empire, Eloquence, Military Genius," 335–355.

153 One reason for the preference for Quintilian may have had less to do with any actual differences between the two great Latin rhetoricians and may have owed more, instead, to the fact that Quintilian's rhetorical doctrines are laid out in a way that is easier to follow and more consistently and unambiguously expressed. Valla rejects the dialogue format preferred by Cicero and himself uses a straightforward, if less dramatic, manner of presentation.

154 Valla was attacked in the most vehement of terms by Poggio as "a fanatical and crazy dreamer vomiting forth insanity, a most stupid ass, a beast grazing in the field of stupidity, an ignorant, incongruous, awkward, absurd writer of a book full of verbosity and stupid loquacity which ought rather to be called *De ignorantia* than *De elegantia*, a most stupid man with no power, no influence, no training, a mad dog, a raging reviler, a wrangling pettifogger, a misshapen hideous monster, a drunkard, a bastard, a prostitute, the worst kind of old sly-boots, a cook, a stable-boy, and a braggart" (transl. Scott, *Imitation of Cicero*, 11). For two important studies by Salvatore Camporeale on Valla, see Baker and Celenza, *Christianity, Latinity, and Culture*.

to reshape the church's traditional language: nuns became *virgines vestales*, saints were *heroes* or *divi*, the cardinals themselves were *senatores*, and dates were recorded using the ancient Latin system of Kalends, Nones, and Ides.¹⁵⁵ Paolo Cortesi, the author of a commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, called Thomas Aquinas *Apollo Christianorum*. In 1535 Mario Nizzoli produced a *Lexicon Ciceronianum* to assist in the production of pure Ciceronian prose.¹⁵⁶ Lest we be tempted to take the radical positions of Bembo and his fellow devotees of Cicero less than seriously, it is well to recall just how mesmerizing the effect of ancient paradigms such as the Belvedere Torso or the Pantheon had upon sixteenth-century artists and architects like Michaelangelo. Rarely have they been criticized for sticking too closely to classical models.

The "Ciceronians" of Rome were regarded as extreme by other humanists who esteemed Cicero but did not consider him to be the sole master of Latin prose style. Poliziano advised his students to pursue an eclectic style that borrowed from the best of the Latin prose authors and preferred to speak with his own voice rather than "channeling" Cicero, as he declares: "*Non exprimis inquit aliquis 'Ciceronem.' Quid tum? Non enim sum Cicero, me tamen (ut opinor) exprimo*" ("Someone says: 'You don't sound like Cicero.' Why should I? For I am not Cicero but rather sound like myself, or so I think").¹⁵⁷ Challenging the assumptions and priorities of this movement was the dialogue *Ciceronianus* written by the wittily erudite Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1528). Christophe de Longueil, who hailed from the Netherlands but was deeply influenced by the Ciceronians during his long stay in Rome, is most likely the inspiration for the character Neoponus, whom Erasmus uses to lampoon the radical positions of the dogmatic Ciceronians.¹⁵⁸ In the dialogue, it appears that Neoponus is suffering from a strange disease; he has driven himself ill (and mad), thanks to

155 The singular God of the Bible became *di immortales*, and Mary was referred to as *dea* (Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 168). See also Fantazzi, "Pietro Bembo," 925–927, and "Imitation, Emulation, Ciceronianism, Anti-Ciceronianism," 155–160.

156 On the clever trap laid for the Ciceronians in Rome by Muretus, see Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship*, 2, 150. Muretus included a number of words that he found in Cicero's writings but which had been omitted by Nizzoli. The Ciceronians protested vigorously against such barbarisms until Muretus showed them where the words actually appeared in Cicero's writings, at which point those words which had moments before been judged to be harsh and uncouth, now suddenly began to sound "smooth and sweet and delightful to the ear."

157 *Ep.* 8.16 (Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, 143).

158 On Longueil, see Tunberg, "Ciceronian Latin," 13–61.

his manic dedication to Cicero. He reads no other author and takes six nights to write a six-line letter, which he then requires even more time to revise, in order to ensure that it contains nothing unCiceronian. Because he cannot afford to be disturbed by other people, he has not married or had children, and he does his reading and writing in a sound-proof room. His interlocutor Bulephorus challenges Neoponus's assumptions and in so doing sums up Erasmus's own sensible position on the question of how best to imitate Cicero:

Another thing to remember is that we must imitate the most distinctive thing that Cicero offers us, and that lies not in mere words nor in the outer layer of verbal expression but in substance and sentiments, in intellectual ability, in right judgment. What is the good of a son being like his father in physical features if he is unlike him in mind and character?¹⁵⁹

Despite his criticism of the Ciceronians, Erasmus himself continued to regard Cicero as a master of the Latin language and to endorse the value of his imitation, properly done. Through his stinging rebuke of dogmatic Ciceronianism, it could be said, in fact, that Erasmus did as much as anyone to help ensure Cicero's position as the greatest, and most emulable, of the classical Latin prose stylists for northern humanists, including reformers of the church; the latter respected enormously Erasmus's achievements in matters of style and rhetoric, if not always in theology.¹⁶⁰

Reformation Latin

Ad fontes! That the urgent call to return to the pristine Greco-Roman springs that for so long served to water the arts and letters of antiquity, inspired Renaissance humanists is well known; that it also motivated Reformation theologians, even those in places like Wittenberg, regarded by many of Luther's contemporaries as a backwater of sorts, situated in a remote part of Germany which itself was "still sunk in medieval darkness," has been less often recognized.¹⁶¹

In the past, cultural historians have gone so far as to argue that "Germany had only a Reformation" and did not experience anything like a Renaissance

¹⁵⁹ Transl. Knott, *Ciceronian*, 447–448.

¹⁶⁰ On Erasmus's judgments in this dialogue, "often general, but sometimes particular, of what comprises Latin style, what does not, and what variety is permitted based on the Classical corpus," see Gotoff, "Stylistic Criticism," 359.

¹⁶¹ Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 114.

at all until the eighteenth century.¹⁶² While the Renaissance has all too often been described and analyzed using primarily aesthetic categories, the Reformation has tended to be regarded as a theological phenomenon only. Reynolds and Wilson, for instance, describe Renaissance humanism as a “fundamentally secular” phenomenon, although they do qualify this observation (somewhat strangely) by adding that it “quickly gained a foothold within the Church.”¹⁶³ It is unlikely that such a clear demarcation between “secular” and “the Church” could have been so easily made in the early modern period. It has been a common misperception, beginning already perhaps with Jacob Burckhardt’s *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien*, that the Renaissance was a nascent anti-Christian movement or even a subversive attempt to resurrect the paganism of antiquity. In fact, however, many of its leaders were highly ranked churchmen and not anti-Catholic or atheistic at all. Many of the Italian humanists were quite serious about cultivating their own piety and increasing that of their constituencies and not at all opposed to the idea of reform within the Catholic church. The Lutheran Reformation, by the same token, was not exclusively focused on theological issues or dismissive of the entire ancient Greco-Roman cultural heritage. Many of the reformers enthusiastically embraced the poetry, rhetoric, art, and even some of the philosophical ideas associated with what we now often term (but they did not) “the classics.”¹⁶⁴

Distinctions between the Renaissance and the Reformation are valid in many ways and for many reasons, but they are not very useful at all if they cause us to view the early modern period exclusively through the lens of the

162 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 367, for instance, suggests that, unlike other countries in the early modern period which had “both a Renaissance and a religious Reformation,” Germany’s “leader Luther helped to crush out those sparks of the Renaissance flame which did appear at the same time. And the fire did not catch.” Highet has not been the only scholar to see no connection between Luther and Renaissance humanism. Pierre Grappin argued that Luther contributed to the “rapid end” of humanism, with “his success at suppressing the Renaissance in German lands” (“L’humanisme en Allemagne,” 593). More recently, in their chapter on “Northern Methodical Humanism,” *From Humanism to Humanities*, Grafton and Jardine acknowledge that “other figures, notably Melancthon and Sturm, might usefully have been made part of the discussion” (p. 125), but they concentrate instead on Agricola and Erasmus and spend more time on France (the Scaligers) and England than on Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Luther’s name is barely mentioned.

163 Reynolds and Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars*, 124.

164 On the central importance of artistic contributions to the Reformation, in particular those of the Wittenberg artist and businessman, Lucas Cranach, see Ozment, *The Serpent and the Lamb*.

Enlightenment (when there *was* a decided embrace of ancient paganism set in stark opposition to Christianity) and to ignore the passionate commitment, shared equally by these two early modern developments, to return to what they both considered the pristine classical sources of Christian European culture, including Cicero and his Latinity.

The humanist movement that began in Italy eventually became a northern European phenomenon too, and the Reformation was not only dependent in some incidental ways on so-called “northern” humanism, but could conceivably never have happened without it. As Bernd Moeller puts it with memorable succinctness: *Ohne Humanismus keine Reformation*.¹⁶⁵ The Reformation, in other words, not only passively tolerated humanism, but was itself a humanist development. Humanist emphases on studying the Bible in the original languages, using refined literary strategies for textual interpretation, setting texts securely within historical contexts, and communicating the results of theological work winsomely to others, were none of them incidental matters to Luther and other reformers. Rather, they constituted crucial elements of a movement that stressed the principle of *sola scriptura*, challenged the authority of the Roman Catholic church, and proclaimed the priesthood of all believers. It was through the close reading of the Scriptures, in particular, Paul’s letter to the Romans, that Luther discovered the fundamental Protestant principle of justification by faith. It was thanks to careful philological and historical work that documents that had formerly been used to substantiate the validity of the Roman church’s claims like the “Donation of Constantine” began to be questioned. And, above all, it was the rhetoric that the reformers used to persuade a wide variety of people, of all classes and occupations and languages, that their beliefs were valid and applicable to others, appealing to the emotions as well as to the intellect, that helped to guarantee the successes the Reformation enjoyed in so many areas of Europe and elsewhere for such a long time.¹⁶⁶

Of Cicero in particular, it used to be quite common to assume that this hero of the Renaissance had but little to contribute directly to the cause of the Reformation. Consider the observations of John Rolfe:

While the habits of thought inspired by Cicero fostered the spirit which led to the Reformation, as we have seen, his direct contribution to that movement does not appear to have been great.... Such remarks as those

¹⁶⁵ See Moeller, “Die deutschen Humanisten,” 59. On literary studies and their vital relationship with the Reformation in general, see Cummings, *Literary Culture*.

¹⁶⁶ Pioneering scholars such as Lewis Spitz, Helmar Junghans, and Erika Rummel have helped to blaze this particular critical trail.

of Luther were rather reflections of the Renaissance than an indication of the spirit of the Reformation upon which in fact, so far as it was true to itself, Cicero had little direct influence. The only movement of the period of the Reformation which can be traced directly to Cicero's inspiration was, as Zielinski points out, the Italo-Polish Socinianism, so called from its leaders Laelius and Festus Socinus.¹⁶⁷

While their debt to Cicero has not always been acknowledged or recognized as fully as that of the Renaissance humanists of Italy, most of the early northern Protestant reformers did employ a classical Latin prose style inspired to some degree by Cicero.¹⁶⁸ These writings have been more often studied by theologians than by students of culture or *belles lettres*, but in fact the question of how to use classical Latin prose correctly and elegantly was a critical part of how the new developments in theology in the early sixteenth century distinguished themselves. With its deep regard for matters of style, including figures of speech and thought, and its consideration of the key rhetorical principles of ethos and pathos, Latin prose shaped by Ciceronian principles, even if not strictly "Ciceronian," proved to be a crucial tool that helped the first reformers to shape, quite self-consciously, a theology distinct from that of their scholastic predecessors,¹⁶⁹

167 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 146–147. Rolfe devotes only a few pages to Cicero's influence on the Reformation. Almost a century later, the topic is conspicuous by its absence in the recently published (2013) *Cambridge Companion to Cicero*. The chapter on "Receptions of Cicero" includes considerations of Cicero's reception in "the Imperial Period, Late Antiquity, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the 19th Century, and the Twentieth/twenty-first-century," but not the Reformation. The section on "Martin Luther and the German Reformation" receives only 11 pages (out of 443 total) in Weil's 2000 *Jahre Cicero*. James J. Murphy complains of the lack of "a definitive study of the rhetoric of Lutheran Protestantism," and this "despite the work of scholars like Birgit Stolt" (Murphy, "One Thousand Neglected Authors," 36). There are welcome exceptions now to this rule, such as Peter Mack's *History of Renaissance Rhetoric*, which includes thoughtful considerations of the contributions of Reformation rhetoricians such as Melancthon and Sturm.

168 "But there was in literature, no real productive union between the German national mind and the art and thought of Greece and Rome" (Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 114). Highet's views were fairly typical for his time (mid-twentieth century), and while they now seem dated, views such as his may help to explain why there still has been so little scholarship, relatively speaking, devoted to Cicero's impact on the Reformation, especially given how much evidence there is for it (Classen, "*Cicero orator inter Germanos*," 79–114 and 157–176).

169 On the controversy between the humanists and the scholastics in general, see Rummel, *Humanist-Scholastic Debate*, and, with a greater focus on Germany, Overfield, *Humanism and Scholasticism*.

who had relied more heavily on the unadorned appeal of Aristotelian logic than the arts of persuasion.¹⁷⁰

It is possible to define literature so narrowly as to exclude all theological writing, but why should a sermon constructed in Ciceronian style or a hymn in praise of Christ instead of Apollo not be considered an example of “literature?” Many of the Reformers themselves explicitly acknowledged their debt to the ancient classical authors. When asked for the secret to his success in writing German hymns, Luther credited the author of the *Aeneid* with helping him learn *Vertonungskunst*: “The poet Virgil taught me this, the artist who is also so capable of applying his song and text to the story that he relates” (WA 19,50). To be sure, if the Reformation is set in strict opposition to the Renaissance, it must follow that a literary “darling” of the Renaissance such as Cicero cannot have had much of an impact on the Reformation, if it was indeed so very different from the Renaissance. It is not surprising, given such a premise, that scholars operating under the assumptions of this binary formulation would so often overlook the obvious debt of the theological writings of the Reformation to Cicero.

The keen interest in Cicero and Ciceronianism that reached such a fever pitch in Italy was fairly quickly translated north beyond the Alps. By the beginning of the sixteenth century it had reached northern Germany and the newly founded University of Wittenberg (1502). Peter Luder was one of the first of the “northern humanists” to travel and study in Italy. He returned to Germany in 1456, inspired by his encounter with Italian humanism with a strong determination to rescue the Latin language from “barbarism” at the University of Heidelberg. Rudolph Agricola, born in northern Holland, proved to be an ardent student of Cicero and played a key role in reconfiguring the relationship between logic and rhetoric with the publication of his *De inventione dialectica* (1479). Conrad Celtis, named poet laureate when he was not yet 30 years old, became professor of poetry in Vienna (1497) and worked tirelessly for the improvement of Latin instruction. Celtis was no mere literary pedant. He built and played organs, painted, sculpted, and was a gymnast.¹⁷¹ Willibald Pirckheimer, a close friend of the artist Albrecht Dürer, studied in Padua and became a leading supporter of classical education in the city of Nürnberg, where his influence led to the establishment of classical Latin lectureships at two of

170 On the importance of various forms of persuasion, including preaching, drama, music, the visual arts, and the book, for the success of the Reformation, see Pettegree, *Reformation and the Culture of Persuasion*.

171 For a biographical study of the German “Arch-Humanist,” see Spitz, *Conrad Celtis*.

the city's main schools.¹⁷² Humanism took hold of entire university faculties in northern Europe, as in Erfurt where new humanist professors like Nikolaus Marschalk were hired and scholastic curricula replaced. The rhetoric of Cicero was already the subject of lectures at Erfurt in 1469. Cicero's *De officiis* received a German translation (anonymous) as early as 1488. In 1534, Johann Freiherr zu Schwarzenberg's translations of *De amicitia*, *De senectute*, and *Tusculan Disputations* appeared.¹⁷³ Cicero's *Pro Marcello* was translated into German in 1542.¹⁷⁴ Farther north, in England, Nicholas Grimald's translation of *De officiis* went through ten editions between 1553 and 1610.¹⁷⁵

There were differences, to be sure, among the sixteenth-century humanists, and one distinction they themselves drew had to do with whether they hailed from north or south of the Alps. It was more than a purely geographic matter. Humanism had risen to prominence earlier in Italy than in Germany. Its Italian pedigree was longer there than in German-speaking territories, and, whether it is a valid consideration or not, prevenience is often associated with preeminence.¹⁷⁶ The northern humanists seem often on the defensive, even when their sense of cultural inferiority is not always explicitly expressed. Conrad Celtis delivered a lecture at the University of Ingolstadt in which he challenged Germans to rival the achievements of Italian humanism. But they also went on the attack. The scathing parody, *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, attributed to Crotus Rubianus and Ulrich von Hutten, mocks the Roman clerics who supposedly authored the letters. One of the most hurtful insults was the disparagement of their monastic Latinity. Such differences, of course, should not be exaggerated. The vehemence of the rhetoric of Hutten and others may speak more to the commonalities between the various regional humanist movements than to their fundamental differences.¹⁷⁷

One of the most critical new developments in northern Humanism was the expansion of the definition of *fontes* to include the Hebrew language. For Italian humanists the classical sources included the seminal writings of the ancient Greeks and Romans, the Greek New Testament, and the church fathers,

172 See Schlieff, "Albrecht Dürer," 185–205.

173 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 119.

174 Ibid., 123.

175 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 148–149. Grimald's poem on Cicero's death (translated from Theodor Beza's original) is one of the first examples of blank verse in English.

176 See Henderson, "Language, Race, Church Reform," 3–42.

177 For more on the *Epistolae obscurorum virorum*, see Holborn, *Eve of Reformation*. Hutten, a soldier as well as a man of letters, was particularly fierce in defense of his principles, declaring "that what does not move one to action is like philosophizing in the shadows" (Spitz, *Sturm*, 120).

but not necessarily the Hebrew Old Testament.¹⁷⁸ The Protestant humanists, with their heavy emphasis on the principle of *sola scriptura*, tended to promote the study of Hebrew more vigorously than their southern counterparts. In the north, Johann Reuchlin was one of the first to devote himself seriously to learning not only Greek but Hebrew.¹⁷⁹ In France, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples left his position at the University of Paris to devote himself to biblical scholarship.¹⁸⁰ Here are the first real stirrings of the lively intellectual development that has often been termed “biblical humanism,” dedicated to the value of ancient rhetoric and literary studies, but especially the biblical languages, and aimed at educating young scholars to become like Jerome, the celebrated *vir trilinguis*.¹⁸¹

Erasmus was one of the key figures in this development. In his early studies in the Netherlands, Erasmus became thoroughly steeped in both the Latin classics and the church fathers. In one of his first writings, the *Antibarbarorum liber*, he argues strongly that the classics need not be seen as inimicable to Christianity. His translation of the Greek text of the New Testament into classical Latin was intended to be not only more elegant but also more faithful to the original than the Vulgate. The significance, riskiness, and influence of this project can hardly be overstated.¹⁸²

While Valla had already articulated the reasons for rejecting “barbaric” Medieval Latin in favor of classical Latin, it was Erasmus, more directly and immediately, whose influence was to shape the Latin prose of so many of the northern humanists and reformers. The corrective which the Dutch humanist offered to the overenthusiastic imitation of Cicero in Italy, his own theoretical writings such as *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum*, as well as his powerful literary example had a profound and enduring effect on subsequent reformers. Avoiding both the “apish” imitation of Cicero¹⁸³ and the obscure and digressive Latin style of contemporaries like Guillaume Budé, Erasmus settled on a

178 To be sure, the growing interest in Hebrew was not a northern phenomenon exclusively. In Spain, the Complutensian Polyglot, sponsored by Cardinal Ximenes, included Hebrew as well as Greek and Latin; it was completed in 1517. On Ximenes and the Complutensian Polyglot, see Olin, *Catholic Reform*, Chapter 2.

179 On Reuchlin and Luther, see Rummel, *Case against Johann Reuchlin*, Chapter 3.

180 See Rice, *Prefatory Epistles*.

181 See Taylor, “Biblical Humanism,” 295–312.

182 Thomas Bilney, for example, was “allured” by Erasmus’s Latin New Testament and ended up being executed for his beliefs in 1531 (Hall, “Erasmus,” 98).

183 On his description of the strict but superficial Ciceronians who imitated the Roman master of style as “apes” (*simiae Ciceronis*), see Gouwens, “Erasmus,” 523–545.

sensible *media via*, developing an elegant Latin prose that served exceedingly well to facilitate the clear and full exchange of theological ideas.¹⁸⁴

In one of his last published works (1535), *Ecclesiastes sive concionator evangelicus*, Erasmus dealt with the art of preaching.¹⁸⁵ The work enjoyed great popularity and after its first printing was issued in nine subsequent editions within the decade. Erasmus departed significantly from traditional medieval homiletical theory and practice, avoiding both the imitation of “the schematic preaching of the Latin Fathers” that had become virtually *de rigueur*, and the “histrionics” into which “late medieval popular sermons” so often descended. Rather than focusing “on verbal play and theatrical vulgarity,” Erasmus stressed the importance for effective preaching of “figures of thought, vivid depiction of biblical scenes, dramatization, and imagery.” As Debora Shuger concludes, it was Erasmus who single-handedly succeeded in making “the Christian grand style possible” for succeeding generations of pulpit stylists.¹⁸⁶

Most of the reformers were virtually bilingual, using both languages comfortably for all aspects of communication, including everyday conversation. But it was as a written language that Latin was to enjoy its real Reformation flowering. Throughout the sixteenth century, Latin continued to occupy an unchallenged position as the most prestigious vehicle for formal, written communication. Indeed, Luther had to defend his decision to cast some of his theological writings in the German language: “And I really will not be ashamed to preach and write for the unlearned in German” (WA 6,203). No doubt it was the fact that Latin had long been the traditional language of the courts of Europe that made its continued use so valuable for those reformers often described as “magisterial” (because they worked closely with regional magistrates and other secular authorities to accomplish their reforms).¹⁸⁷

Latin also retained its lofty status in the early modern period because it continued to be the language associated with schools and universities. Scriptural

184 See, in general, Kohls, *Theologie des Erasmus*.

185 See O'Malley, “Erasmus and the History of Rhetoric,” 1–29. One of the first preachers to break with the tendencies of the medieval *artes praedicandi* was the Franciscan friar, Lorenzo Guglielmo Traversagni, who published a treatise on preaching in England (1478) based heavily on *Ad Herennium*. His *Margita eloquentiae castigatae* did not, however, achieve wide circulation. Nor did Johann Reuchlin's *Liber congestorum de arte praedicandi*, published in 1504 (Mack, *History of Renaissance Rhetoric*, 260–261), although there was a 1508 edition in Wittenberg at Luther's time (see the discussion of a 1536 catalogue in Kolb, *Martin Luther and the Enduring Word of God*, Chap. 5).

186 Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 64.

187 See Dixon, *Protestants*, 6–7, for useful distinctions between “magisterial” and “radical” reform movements.

exegeses were often first presented in lecture form (*praelectiones* or *conciones*) in Latin and then subsequently published in the same language. Many of these were prepared with well educated students or alumni in mind. The consequential lectures of the Oxford theologian John Colet on Romans begun in 1496 were delivered in Latin.¹⁸⁸ Many of the Latin biblical commentaries of John Calvin are based on lectures he gave to his students in Geneva. In these he makes frequent reference to Latin authors, including Cicero.

Another aspect of Latin that helped to ensure its continued viability throughout the sixteenth century was its possession of a fully developed theological vocabulary that would be readily understood by an international readership. Some of the most decisive treatises of the Reformation were written in Latin. Contrary to what might be expected, such writings were often quite lively and far from dry or tedious; frequently they were charged with vigorous polemical energy.¹⁸⁹ One need only think of Thomas More's spirited *Responsio ad Lutherum* (1523), countering Luther's controversial ideas about the "Babylonian captivity" of the church.¹⁹⁰ What is arguably the single most famous document of the Reformation, Luther's 95 Theses, was first written in Latin. The theses were quickly translated into German, but it was in their Latin form that Luther's stinging attacks on the practice of selling indulgences had their most widespread impact in regions where few spoke German.¹⁹¹

A final explanation for the extensive use of classical Latin by the reformers, often overlooked, is that they apparently enjoyed it. Beginning at an early age, even reformers who later used very little Latin (e.g., John Knox) learned how to read, speak, and write it passably well.¹⁹² Some were exceptionally gifted in this regard. Zwingli, who may have been a student of Conrad Celtis in Vienna, was known as "Switzerland's Cicero." Heinrich Bullinger supposedly knew the entire *Aeneid* by heart and turned the passion of Christ into Latin verse.¹⁹³

John Calvin's Latinity may serve here as a case in point. He used the French language masterfully, but it was in Latin that his theological influence spread

188 See Duhamel, "Oxford Lectures of Colet," 493–510. For a recent biography, see, Arnold, *Dean John Colet*.

189 Of theological Latin written in England at this time, Binns, *Intellectual Culture*, 332, observes that even though "polemical and pugnacious," it is "not narrow or crabbed," but rather "infused with humane learning and wide general reading."

190 See Headley, *Complete Works*, vol. 5.

191 Latin also served as the primary vehicle for oral debate at important theological disputations such as the Leipzig Debate (1519) and the Marburg Colloquy (1529).

192 On Knox and the development of Scottish vernacular prose, see Farrow, *John Knox*.

193 Schmidt, *Luthers Bekanntschaft*, 26, and Backus, "Protestantism," 339–340.

far beyond Geneva and other French-speaking regions of Europe. Jean Cauvin (his last name was later Latinized to Calvinus) studied for the priesthood with the humanist Mathurin Cordier in Paris, where he excelled at Latin. After going on to study Roman law at Orleans, he came under the influence of the Italian humanist at Bourges, Andrea Alciato. While still quite young, Calvin prepared a commentary on Seneca's *De clementia*, filled with careful historical and philosophical annotations as well as grammatical and rhetorical analyses.¹⁹⁴ The work that established Calvin's reputation was *Institutio religionis Christianae* (1536). It was successful not only because of its thorough grounding in Scripture and carefully conceived structure but also thanks to the clarity and cogency of its Latin.¹⁹⁵

While Calvin did not publish any further commentaries on classical authors, he reread Cicero every year.¹⁹⁶ His keen interest in the ancient rhetor's theory and example is understandable. Theology had to have a rhetorical component for Calvin; if it could not be effectively communicated it was not theology.¹⁹⁷ The very first words on the knowledge of God from the second edition (Stuttgart, 1539) of his *Institutes* may serve to illustrate the powerful effectiveness of Calvin's prose:

Tota fere sapientiae nostrae summa, quae vera demum ac solida sapientia censeri debeat, duabus partibus constat: cognitione Dei, et nostri. Illa scilicet, quae non modo unum esse Deum ostendat, quem ab omnibus oporteat coli et adorari, sed simul etiam doceat, illum unum omnis ueritatis, sapientiae, bonitatis, iustitiae, iudicii, misericordiae, potentiae, sanctitatis fontem esse (CR 29,279).

Nearly the whole sum of our wisdom which ought finally to be deemed true and reliable, consists of two parts: knowing God and knowing ourselves. The former of course shows not only that there is one God whom

194 Published at Calvin's own expense, it did not sell well despite Calvin's hopes for its success (Battles and Hugo, *Calvin's Commentary*, 386). On Calvin's humanism in general, see the essays collected in Boudou and Pouey-Mounou, *Calvin et l'humanisme*.

195 Calvin produced a second edition in Latin before completing a French translation (Geneva, 1541). The work's title may have been influenced by Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria* (McGrath, *Life of John Calvin*, 136–137).

196 According to his biographer, Theodor Beza (Gordon, *Calvin*, 4). For a theological analysis of Calvin's citations of Cicero in the first pages of the *Institutes*, see Leithart, "That Eminent Pagan," 1–12.

197 See Jones, *Calvin and the Rhetoric of Piety*, 11.

it is fitting for all to worship and adore, but at the same time also teaches that he is the one source of all truth, wisdom, goodness, righteousness, justice, mercy, power, and holiness.

This is “sparkling” Latin,¹⁹⁸ written in a stately style, correct, pellucid, and ornamented appropriately. Verbs are positioned at the end of phrases, not directly following the subject; the relative clause of characteristic is in the subjunctive; the indirect statement uses the accusative and infinitive construction. Even though the sentences are fairly long and quite intricate there is nothing here that is obscure. The antithesis in the second sentence, for instance, is made explicit. And the passage is ornamented—but not overly so. The most conspicuous figure, asyndeton, is appropriate to the context, not simply added as a decorative flourish: the conjunctions that one might expect to find connecting the eight nouns in the genitive are missing, but God is the connecting element that conjoins them. This is made all the more emphatic by the fact that the nouns are enclosed within the adjective and the noun describing God. The effect is not only acoustically striking but meaningful. While the positive values that flow from God are many, they all have but one source, which is God; they certainly do not emerge from the human mind alone, which is “alienated thoroughly from the righteousness of God.”¹⁹⁹

198 Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 189.

199 *Inst.* 2.1.19 (*CR* 29, 372).

“The Real German Cicero”

In this chapter, we focus our attention on Martin Luther's high estimation of Cicero. Luther's use and evaluation of him is as complicated a matter as Luther himself. He refers to Cicero frequently over the course of his life, often, but by no means always, in the most positive of terms. This variability of opinion on his part would have surprised none of his contemporaries who knew Luther well. Over the course of his life, he expressed so many contradictory ideas and held so many opposing opinions, often put in the strongest of terms, that he can be quoted on both sides of a number of issues. In respect to Cicero, Luther's opinions resemble the meandering patterns of a “wandering planet,” as he once described himself, as opposed to a “fixed star” (WATR 4,501). We shall reserve our consideration of most of Luther's negative judgments of Cicero for the final chapter of the book.

It is usually not Luther but the scholarly Melancthon and other Reformation humanists whose names are more frequently mentioned in connection with Cicero. Our reasons for concentrating on Luther are threefold. In the first place it is precisely because Luther was not himself a consistent “Ciceronian,” even in the general sense of the word, that he is so interesting to examine in this regard. Secondly, Luther was regarded by many of his followers as a Cicero of sorts himself, a master of literary style in his own right. Finally, the potential of his example and authority to shape the development and practice of Lutheran theology, its teaching and preaching, during the first half of the sixteenth century and beyond can hardly be overstated. While he resisted the temptation to become a second “pope,” as it were, for the new ecclesiastical movements that emerged in the wake of his protests against Roman Catholicism, Luther was nonetheless the Reformation's most conspicuous spokesperson as long as he lived. This extremely eloquent champion of the Gospel was an enthusiastic, if not uncritical, admirer of Cicero, and his opinions carried great weight in his own generation and long thereafter, especially for his Lutheran followers who considered him, in the words of Robert Kolb, a “prophet, teacher, and hero,” and even a “fifth evangelist.”¹

So, why exactly did the man whom Erasmus Alberus described as the *rechter Teutscher Cicero* (“the real German Cicero”) think so highly of the first, the

1 See Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet*, 11–13.

Roman, Cicero?² What was Luther's relationship with the Latin language? Is it at all accurate to describe Luther's own Latin prose style as Ciceronian? What was it in particular that Luther appreciated about Cicero as an orator? These are questions that will be addressed in this chapter.

"I Love Cicero"

Even though he has long been considered to be "the father" of the modern German language, with his literary reputation today resting largely on his vernacular writings such as his translation of the Bible into German and his widely popular chorales, we should not forget that Martin Luther was a gifted literary artist in Latin as well.³ As Birgit Stolt has observed, the creator of the German *Schriftsprache* was not himself so quintessentially Germanic in his style as he has often been made out to be.⁴ One could even go so far as to say that "in a certain sense the German language was but his second."⁵ From his earliest schooling throughout the course of his university training, we know that Luther was taught primarily in Latin. And like other academic humanists, he continued throughout his life to use Latin in debates, lectures, treatises, everyday conversation, letter writing, and poetry. Of the 467 of Luther's publications counted by Roloff (not including letters), 95 were written originally in Latin. Another 49 texts were translated from German into Latin.⁶ Using Kurt Aland's listing of more than 800 of Luther's writings in *Hilfsbuch zum Lutherstudium*, Cameron MacKenzie estimates that "around 240 of these works employ exclusively or, at least, extensively the Latin language. This is almost 30% of Aland's list."⁷

How well did Luther know Cicero and other classical authors? One of the first to address the question of Luther's *Bekanntschaft* with the classics was Oswald Schmidt, but his work is quite cursory (only 64 pages). Another important

2 Deumert and Vandenbussche, *Germanic Standardizations*, 221. Already in his funeral oration for Luther, Justus Jonas was praising his contributions to the improvement of the German language (Erbesen, "Luther und die neuhochdeutsche Schriftsprache," 579).

3 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 111, suggests that Germans in the early modern period "had few, if any, writers of talent who bridged the gap between their native cultures and the culture of Greece and Rome; and they had very few translators. Their authors were either wholly German (or Polish or Magyar) or else wholly Latin." Such a generalization clearly does not apply well to an author like Luther.

4 Stolt, *Rhetorik des Herzens*, 27.

5 Alfsvåg, "Language and Reality," 86.

6 Roloff, "Luthers literarische Leistung," 255.

7 MacKenzie, "Luther and Latin Language," 154.

name in this connection is that of Lewis W. Spitz, whose studies of this subject, while helpful, fail to penetrate very deeply.⁸ More recently, Reinhard Schwarz has examined Luther's familiarity with ancient Greco-Roman poets and historians.⁹ But valuable as such studies have been, there are not many of them, and none has done justice to the question of how often Luther spoke and wrote about Cicero's words and works, and how deeply, like other humanists, he appreciated the intensely civic-minded ancient orator who might even be thought to deserve some sort of consideration in the Christian afterlife.¹⁰

Luther was quite familiar with Cicero and other classical Latin authors, and he referred to them often and quoted from their works throughout the course of his life.¹¹ There are well over 300 citations of Cicero and his works in the indices to the *Weimarer Ausgabe*, second only in frequency to Aristotle among the classical Greco-Roman authors. Of the Latin authors, Cicero is cited more frequently even than Luther's favorite poet, Virgil, who is listed over 250 times, closely followed by Horace and Terence. Ovid and Pliny the Elder are mentioned over 100 times. With over 50 references each, we find Seneca, Suetonius, Juvenal, and Plautus. Quintilian and Livy are listed over 30 times, and Martial 20 times.¹²

Listings such as these are hardly absolute or definitive, but they do give us a general idea of the extent of Luther's familiarity with the classics.¹³ It is

8 Spitz concludes that Luther's knowledge of the classics was not any more extensive than that of other learned contemporaries and that he did not "in his later years, learn more of the classics and use them" (Spitz, "Luther and Humanism," 83). The fact that Luther set out to prepare an edition of Aesop in 1530 when he was in his late 40s suggests that he was indeed interested in using the classics "in his later years." See the discussion in Springer, *Luther's Aesop*, 12.

9 Schwarz ("Beobachtungen zu Luthers Bekanntschaft," 7–22) points out that it is unclear how much of Luther's knowledge of the ancient authors was second hand and suggests that he used quotations from the classics for "decorative" purposes.

10 On Cicero's influence on Luther, Melanchthon, and Sturm, see Kirsch, "Der deutsche Protestantismus und Cicero," 131–49.

11 While less conversant with Greek authors than Latin, Luther was also deeply interested in Homer, Plato, Demosthenes, and especially Aesop, and regarded them (for the most part) quite favorably. He refers to Plutarch over 40 times in his writings. Luther was also deeply engaged with the philosophers Aristotle and Epicurus, but his attitude toward them both was often intensely negative. On the older Luther's animosity to Epicurus, see Maron, *Martin Luther und Epikur*.

12 Luther purchased a text of Lucan as late as 1537 (WATR 3,472).

13 A caveat: these numbers are the result of counting references and quotations that appear in the indices and do not reflect careful analysis of each one in its context. See my discussion in *Luther's Aesop*, 13.

probably true that Luther did not garner all of his quotations and references from his own direct reading of the ancient authors. Most likely, many of his allusions to classical authors were remembered from textbooks used in the schools he attended, or, as Schwarz suggests, the result of second hand knowledge, drawn from the writings of contemporary authors and conversations with learned colleagues, or derived from anthologies like Erasmus's *Adagia*.¹⁴

It is also true that Luther did not speak or write exclusively in Latin, as Erasmus, for instance, was careful always to do. Luther often used a *Mischsprache* in his conversation, switching easily from one language to another to fight his verbal battles, as he himself put it.¹⁵ Thanks to the popularity of Johann Aurifaber's monolingual edition of the *Tischreden* (1566), this effect in his conversation has often gone unnoticed and unremarked. Stolt finds Aurifaber's exclusively German Luther "pious, engaged, and chatty." If one reads the bilingual corrective, however, one discovers a Luther who is "much more rigorous, dry, sturdy, and learned."¹⁶ Not only at table, but also in lectures, sermons, and even letters, Stolt has argued that Luther could be bilingual.¹⁷ It is often hard to determine how much of the "code-switching" in these settings is of Luther's own doing and how much may be owed to the short-hand techniques of those who were trying to record his oral productions. Some of the admixture of Latin and German one finds in the pages of the *Weimarer Ausgabe* could perhaps be the result not of Luther's own macaronic tendencies, but rather the work of scribes who used a combination of both languages to record Luther's sermons, conversations, and lectures in a kind of convenient shorthand. The existence of macaronic letters in Luther's own hand, however, makes it clear that it was he himself, and not only his amanuenses, who bore responsibility for at least some of the macaronic texts bearing his name that have come down to us.¹⁸

Neither Luther's extraordinary facility with German nor his blending of Latin and German, however, should obscure the fact that he could and did write correct classical Latin prose. In fact, in a letter to Georg Spalatin, Luther expresses irritation at a report that he did not really know Latin very well; he imagines that such an idea could have gained credence only because of his

14 Luther loved proverbs and seems to have been quite familiar with Erasmus's collection of adages. For more on these, see Reinhart, "Unexpected Returns," 47–60.

15 *Mixtim (ut fit) vernacula lingua digladiabamur* (WAB 1,301).

16 Stolt, *Rhetorik des Herzens*, 22.

17 On Luther's macaronic style in the Table Talks, see Stolt, *Sprachmischung*.

18 See WAB 10,135–6 for an example of a short letter in which Luther switches from one language to the other half a dozen times. In 1527, when he was very sick and thought by those around him to be close to death, he spoke from his bed "in clear words, now in Latin, now in German, now calling on God the Father, now on the Lord Christ" (WATR 3,83).

macaronic style (WAB 1,301).¹⁹ That Luther was fully aware of the difference between classical and "barbaric" Latin is clear from one of his Table Talks: "So in the monastery, all the fathers read *mumpsimus* instead of *sumpsimus*; when a younger brother once criticized the usage on grammatical grounds, the rest of them said: 'You young whippersnapper; are you going to set us straight? We have read *mumpsimus* for such a long time; it should and must remain *mumpsimus*.'" Luther dismissed such obstinate linguistic obscurantism with characteristic vulgarity: "That's the kind of shitty stuff that they did" (WATR 5,685-6).

We are concerned here primarily with Latin prose, not poetry, but both media were of great importance for Luther, as they were for most other humanists. In fact, the flowering of Neo-Latin literature in the Renaissance could be said to have begun in the thirteenth century not with prose but with the Latin poetry of Lovato dei Lovati of Padova.²⁰ (Latin prose remained tied to the medieval *ars dictaminis* until somewhat later.) Petrarch and other Italian humanists (e.g., Baptista Spagnuoli Mantuanus, "good old Mantuan" in Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost*)²¹ were celebrated for their abilities to write Neo-Latin poetry. Rather than following the example of late medieval Latin versification which featured end rhyme and accentual metrics, as for example, in the *Carmina Burana*, humanist poets like Vida and Sannazaro and Johannes Secundus returned to the stylistic norms established by the classical Latin poets (Virgil, Catullus, Tibullus, Ovid, Martial, etc.).

Cicero himself was a poet, not just a prose author, as Luther and other humanists were fully aware. But while he wrote many hexameter verses—his verse translations of Greek originals such as Aratus's *Phaenomena* were highly influential in their time—only fragments survive, and his later influence in this respect was limited.²² One of his only poetic lines to continue to be frequently cited to this day, most often disparagingly (either owing to its internal rhyme, or its unguarded expression of egoism, or both), does not do full justice to the extent of Cicero's poetic talents: *O fortunatam natam me consule Romam* ("O Rome, lucky to have been born when I was consul").²³

19 As Bengt Löfstedt has suggested ("Notizen zu Luthers Briefen und Tischreden," 24), it was precisely Luther's supreme confidence in his abilities with the Latin language that permitted him to take so many of the liberties with it to which pedantic purists take predictable exception. On Luther's Latin sermons, see Löfstedt, "Notizen zu Luthers Predigten," 24-42.

20 Mack, *History of Renaissance Rhetoric*, 11, citing the work of Witt, *Footsteps of the Ancients*.

21 See Piepho, *Holofernes' Mantuan*.

22 On Cicero's poetry, see Spaeth, "Cicero the Poet," 500-512, and Ewbank, *Poems of Cicero*.

23 See Allen, "O fortunatam natam," 130-146.

Just like Cicero, Luther and many of the other busiest and most prominent theologians and churchmen of the Protestant Reformation were prose authors who also wrote Latin poetry in the classical style. It is true that Luther was not nearly as prolific a poet as Melanchthon, nor as accomplished as Theodor Beza, who published his *Juvenilia* in 1548.²⁴ But even though Luther declared that he did not “want to be considered a poet in any respect” (WAB 5,549), he authored nearly 30 Latin poems that have survived. The fact that he did so may well be the single best evidence we have for the true extent of his love of Latin. After all, there really is no practical or utilitarian reason for Luther to have written so much Latin poetry. Other reformers did not. We have only one Latin poem of Calvin’s, the *Epinicion Christo cantatum*, in 61 distichs, written in 1541. That Luther’s verses may not always be of the highest literary quality is beside the point. What is of significance here is that he and other reformers went to the considerable trouble of writing Latin poetry—at all.

These verses were not just juvenile exercises (Luther wrote some of his most ambitious Latin poems in the last years of his life), nor did he regard them all as mere trifles, although some of them were clearly written for the sake of amusement, like the verse inscribed on a glass that Luther gave to Justus Jonas (WA 35,602). It is true that he preferred more compact poetic formats, like the epigram, to the sprawling epic genre,²⁵ but that does not mean that Luther meant them to be nothing more than incidental *nugae*.²⁶ In fact, he sometimes used the classical poets to challenge the ideologies they represented, to provide sharp contrasts between pagan and Christian points of view.²⁷ A good example of such *Kontrastimitation* is his verse retreatment of Psalm 128 contradicting the Epicurean definition of the good life in Martial’s *Epigram* 10.47, written near the end of his life.²⁸

24 On Beza’s youthful Latin verse, see Summers, *View from the Palatine*.

25 Luther’s verse paraphrase of the first seven lines of the *Aeneid* can hardly be considered an epic or even an epyllion. See Springer, “Arms and the Theologian,” 38–53.

26 Erasmus, for one, was careful to distinguish “true poetry” from mere versifying (CWE 85, xxvi). Several of his poems are deeply religious in nature, including one of his most ambitious, an epyllion on Christ’s descent into hell (CWE 85, 112). Helius Eobanus Hessus also wrote an epyllion on the same subject in 1517. For a recent consideration of this popular genre in early modern Germany, see Czaplá, *Bibelepos*, 709–716.

27 It was not uncommon for the reformers to refer to pagan deities in their poetry. Luther’s verse invective against Erasmus names the Furies and Orcus (WATR 1,399). By contrast, Georg Fabricius, rector of Sankt Afra in Meissen from 1546–71, a student of the early Christian poets, avoided references to pagan deities in his own verse.

28 See Springer, “Martin’s Martial,” 23–50.

Several of Luther's Latin poems could be judged to be fairly pious, even devotional. These include his verse paraphrases of biblical passages in Latin. His Latin rendering of Psalm 118:17 was turned into a motet by the contemporary composer, Ludwig Senfl. Paraphrases of the Psalms in classical meters were quite popular in the sixteenth century.²⁹ Helius Eobanus Hessus, the *rex poetarum*, as Luther called him, composed Latin versions of the Psalms in elegiac distichs (1537) at the urging of the Wittenberg reformers. These turned out to be extremely popular and went through many editions.³⁰

Latin's lapidary quality continued to recommend itself in the sixteenth century for use on medals, coins, stove tiles, paintings, and inscriptions.³¹ Luther's epigram for a spring north of Wittenberg, in which he likens its free, fresh water to God's abundant grace, is a lovely example.³² Funeral epitaphs were often set to Latin epigrammatic verse. Luther's moving poem for his daughter Magdalena's tomb is well known.³³ Grave inscriptions could even be used to continue to attack one's opponents after death. Luther called the hexameter verse, *Pestis eram vivens, moriens ero mors tua, Papa*, his own *Epitaphium*.³⁴

The *Dysenteria Martini Lutheri*, a poem of only ten lines in which Luther manages to use various forms of the Latin word *merda* a dozen times (polyp-ton), is a particularly striking (and possibly offensive) example of Luther's scatological invective.³⁵ Did he write the poem in Latin in order to use "the decent obscurity of a dead language"³⁶ to shield the naive and uneducated? Possibly so, but we should remember that while Luther's "Grobianistic" tendencies in Latin may have gone undetected by his unlearned contemporaries, he could be (and often was) just as vulgar in German.³⁷

29 See Gaertner, "Latin Verse Translations," 271–305. The best known of these is a paraphrase of the entire Psalter in Latin verse by George Buchanan, composed in a variety of meters and widely used in Scottish schools. It was even set to music. See Green, "George Buchanan," 142–154.

30 See Vredevelde, *Poetic Works*, vols. 1–4.

31 Harmelink, *Reformation Coin and Medal Collection*.

32 See Springer, "Oreads of Wittenberg," 611–618.

33 See Springer, "Death and Life after Death," 1049–1059.

34 WATR 1,410-1 and WA 35,597-8.

35 See Springer, "Luther's Latin Poetry and Scatology," 373–387.

36 For this expression, see Hunt, *New Know-Nothings*, 179. The epitome of lewd invective from this period is Simon Lemnius's *Monachopornomachia*.

37 Saint Grobian was the patron saint of vulgarity. Friedrich Dedekind, a student of Melanchthon at Wittenberg and later church inspector in Lüneburg, wrote a mock-treatise on etiquette entitled *Grobianus et Grobiana: De morum simplicitate libri tres* (Frankfurt, 1558), which instructed its readers on how best to pursue bad manners.

In fact, Luther used both the German and Latin tongues in a masterful way; he was blessed with a keen sense of audience, a high degree of rhetorical self-awareness, and an uncanny ability to achieve powerful effects with either language. As Peter Matheson puts it: "There is a seriousness of intent about his language, a coinherence of form and content, which gives it a rigorous edge. It is never flowery, and is seldom elegant, although it can be tender, racy, coarse, entertaining, absorbing."³⁸ That Luther was himself endowed with unique rhetorical gifts, of course, does not mean that he would necessarily have had any use at all for Cicero. After all, there were many classical Latin prose authors widely available in the early sixteenth century after whom one could choose to model one's own Latin. But for Luther, as for so many of his humanist contemporaries, Cicero's Latin eloquence was simply unsurpassed.

Luther frequently uses the Roman rhetor's name, linked with that of Demosthenes metonymically, to stand for outstanding oratory in general. Demosthenes was the best known, most politically engaged, of the Attic orators. Cicero's fourteen *Philippics* were named after the famous orations delivered by Demosthenes in the face of the Macedonian threat against Athens under Philipp II. The two orators' names were often associated already in antiquity, and there are numerous similarities. As Plutarch observes in his parallel lives of Demosthenes and Cicero, both orators started from obscure origins, became politically powerful, were forced into exile, and then returned home with their reputations restored. The ends of both of their lives were violent, even tragic.³⁹ Plutarch declines to comment on which of the two was the more charming or powerful as a speaker and instead focuses on the similarity of their political careers. Cicero himself (*Brutus* 9.35) praised Demosthenes as uniquely outstanding and considered him the perfect orator (*Orator* 2.6), while Quintilian described him as *paene lex orandi*, pretty nearly *the* standard for oratorical excellence (*Inst. orat.* 10.1.76).

Luther uses both of these famous orators' names in combination to refer to the highest kind of literary prose achievement. In a letter to Helius Eobanus Hessus, he admits he prefers poetry to prose (*soluta oratio*), even the prose of "Cicero himself and Demosthenes," as though these two authors represented the very pinnacles of Greek and Latin prose style respectively: "For I do admit that I am one of those whom poems move more forcefully, delight more intensely, and stick with more persistently than prose, yes, even if the prose is written by Cicero himself and Demosthenes" (WAB 8,107). When Luther

38 Matheson, *Rhetoric of the Reformation*, 114–115.

39 Demosthenes committed suicide to avoid capture by the forces of Antipater, one of the generals who succeeded Alexander the Great.

discusses the Old Testament prophets' use of vehement language and deep pathos (see, e.g., Isaiah 23, where the prophet rails against the city of Tyre), Luther picks Demosthenes and Cicero as the bases for comparison. The prophet's ability to evoke powerful emotion is superior to the orators' in Luther's estimation, but it is significant that Luther chooses these two pagan orators (and not others) to pit against the great Isaiah.⁴⁰

When Luther is thinking of the epitome of Latin eloquence, it is often Cicero's name alone that he uses. He is *vir eloquentissimus* ("a most eloquent man"; WA 20,13) and *sanctus in suo genere* ("hallowed in his own field"; WA 39.1,75). In his debate with Erasmus on free will, Luther pretends to address one of the scholastic teachers of the church, Duns Scotus, suggesting that he would need the highest degree of eloquence to surpass Cicero and not just good arguments (WA 18,691). In one of his Table Talks, Luther suggests that Cicero's rhetorical abilities in debate are so formidable that he could be compared with the devil, although in that particular contest the mortal rhetor would be bested by his supernatural adversary (as would Luther): "But if I should enter into a debate with the devil, I would be vanquished, for he has better skills at dialectic than Philipp does and more oratorical facility than Cicero" (WATR 3,169).

In a sermon preached in his house in 1532, Luther compares Cicero (and Virgil) with Christ, who surpasses them both when it comes to speaking: "*He can speak*" (*Der kan reden*; WA 36,183). Even though Cicero comes in second-best to both the devil and Jesus, in Luther's mind, this hardly diminishes his oratorical achievements, given the high level of competition. Even when compared with such unusually gifted speakers, Luther implies that Cicero can hold his own.

In another Table Talk, Luther holds up Cicero for implicit praise, not so much for his eloquence as for his unparalleled linguistic ability: "And the Latin language has been so corrupted that not even Cicero, were he to come back to life, would be able to understand things written after his time" (WATR 3,243). In the *Acta Augustana* of 1518, we find Luther singling out Cicero as an example of incomparable excellence as he complains about the same kind of semantic deterioration of words that Thucydides famously decries in his history of the Peloponnesian War (3.82). It now seems, according to Luther, that words and expressions have changed their meanings completely. Even though someone like himself is dedicated to "teaching the truth," his admonitory words are described by his superiors as "disturbing the church." On the other hand, others who seek praise for themselves only and end up denying Christ are said to be "pacifying and exalting the church of Christ." Luther's unwillingness to adopt

40 WATR 3,123. See also WA 8,101 and WA 43,210 for other references to Cicero and Demosthenes as a pair.

this new kind of distorted, evasive terminology, he tells his readers, ensures that no matter how hard he might try to be eloquent he would still appear to be a “barbarian to the Romans” (i.e. Cardinal Cajetan, the papal representative who heard Luther’s case in Augsburg), even if Luther were “to surpass Cicero in eloquence” (WA 2,6).

Luther also uses Cicero’s name to refer to outstanding achievement in the area of Latin prose, as opposed to poetry. Sometimes, in this connection, he even uses Cicero’s name as though it were a common (not a proper) noun. Luther finds an expression in the Psalms more aptly formulated “than any Cicero or poet could ever construct” (WA 31.1,361). Often in this regard it is Virgil, Luther’s favorite Latin poet, with whom Cicero is paired.⁴¹ Like Petrarch and other humanists, Luther viewed these two authors as standing for the very best in Latin poetry and prose respectively. Luther also mentions Terence, one of his favorite Latin authors, in conjunction with Cicero as parallel examples of well known Latin stylists in another of his *Tischreden*, in which he complains that the frequent reading of the Psalms has rendered them less highly valued by some readers precisely because they are so familiar (WATR 3,665).

Luther certainly is familiar with some of Cicero’s orations (or material drawn from them that he has encountered elsewhere). He refers, for example, to the *Pro Flacco*, in which Cicero defends his client’s decision while governor of Asia in 62 BC to forbid Jews in his province to send tribute money to the temple in Jerusalem.⁴² Luther may also be alluding to *Pro Flacco* in his exegesis of Psalm 101:7. He observes that “Cicero himself” admitted that the Greeks were “learned, wise, artistic, talented, verbal people,” but that did not necessarily mean that they were trustworthy.⁴³ In his *Vorlesung* on Titus and Philemon, Luther specifically alludes to Cicero’s *Pro Flacco* in support of his claim that the Greeks are “even today” an “amazingly unreliable people.” Luther follows the ancient prejudice that the Cretans surpassed the rest of *Graecia mendax* in this regard.⁴⁴

In support of the idea that only the truly guilty protest their innocence when an accusation is made without mentioning specific names, Luther quotes in a sermon an expression found in *Pro lege Manilia* 13.37, a speech Cicero delivered in support of giving Pompey authority to wage war against Mithridates in

41 See, e.g., WA 40.1,586 and WA 40.2,270.

42 WATR 4,60; see Marshall, “Flaccus and the Jews,” 139–154.

43 WA 51,258. Luther may be referring to Cicero’s comments on Greek characteristics in passages such as *De orat.* 1.6.22 and 3.15.57 and *Pro Flacco* 9 and 11.

44 WA 25,33. The Epistle to Titus (1:12) has a quotation of Epimenides of Knossos on the deceitfulness of the Cretans.

66 BC: *neminem nomino, ideo nemo potest mecum irasci* ("I am naming nobody, so nobody can be angered at me").⁴⁵ In his *Praelectio in Psalmum 45* (1532), Luther refers generally to Cicero's description of Pompey's notorious good luck as it is found in the same speech (*Pro lege Manilia* 16.47-8).⁴⁶ In his *Enarratio* of Psalm 51 of the same year, Luther appears to be referring to a passage in Cicero's speech *Pro Milone* (2.5) in which the orator maintains that those who aspire to gain the most rewards from the republic are constrained by fear of the gravest punishments (WA 40.2,449). More than once Luther quotes the brief Ciceronian maxim from the same speech (*Pro Milone* 4.11) about laws losing their usual validity in times of war (*silent enim leges inter arma*).⁴⁷ In his lectures on Genesis, Luther alludes to Cicero's claim at the end of *Pro Milone* that his tears prevent him from continuing: "Cicero says somewhere: 'I am prevented by my tears, etc.,' but these are not real tears, prompted by most serious incidents and feelings, as when words and tears are mixed together, and one's speech is interrupted."⁴⁸ Also in his lectures on Genesis, Luther quotes Cicero, *In Verrem* 2.5.71.181, nearly verbatim: *Videmus enim, ut Cicero inquit, quanta sit in invidia, quantoque in odio apud quosdam homines nobiles novorum hominum virtus et industria* (WA 44,620). ("For we see, as Cicero says, with how much envy and with what animus the noble qualities and hard work of new men are regarded by the aristocrats.")

The length and relative precision of quotes like these in works such as his lectures on Genesis have led some to suggest that Luther's auditors and editors must have played an important role in supplementing and perhaps even

45 WA 46,503. The rendering is probably drawn from memory; while Luther's words are close to Cicero's actual words: *nomino neminem; qua re irasci mihi nemo poterit* (OCT, 1965), they are not exactly the same. See a sermon preached in 1545 (WA 49,781) and the conclusion of Luther's exegesis of Psalm 101 (WA 51,264) for macaronic and German variations respectively on the same Ciceronian idea.

46 WA 40.2,501. See also WA 40.2,510. Luther alludes to the same passage in WA 40.3,392 and WA 51,244.

47 There is no particular consistency about Luther's quotations in this instance. See WA 13,397 (*in bello silent leges*) and 425 (*sileant leges inter armas*); WA 31.2,660 (*silent inter arma leges*); and WA 40.3,593 (*silent leges*).

48 WA 44,579: *Cicero alicubi dicit: Impedior lachrimis, etc.* Actually what Cicero says at the end of the *Pro Milone* is: *Neque enim prae lacrimis iam loqui possumus* (38.105; OCT, 1963). Unconsciously, perhaps, Luther is drawing on the verbal formulation of the same idea as it is found in Sedulius, *Paschale carmen* 5.93-5, where the poet declares that his tears are hindering his retelling of the suffering of Jesus before his crucifixion at the hands of Pilate's soldiers: *Heu mihi quantis/Impedior lacrimis rabidum memorare tumultum / Sacriligas movisse manus* (CSEL 10,121).

supplying classical quotations. It is true that Luther was surrounded by learned friends who were eager to help edit his works. At the same time, however, there are plenty of classical allusions in others of Luther's works where we know that there was very little editorial intrusion. Luther was perfectly capable of citing ancient literary passages and their sources all by himself. The fact that there are more classical references to be found in the Genesis lectures than in his sermons may be a function of his consideration for audience expectations; students and others who would have been in attendance and could have understood lectures delivered in Latin would also have been in a position to appreciate classical allusions.⁴⁹ One reason to believe that the citations of the classics in Luther's writings are often his own is that they are sometimes "mistaken" (wrong attributions, variants, etc.).⁵⁰ This fact alone suggests strongly that Luther was himself uniquely responsible for them.⁵¹ Editors, working in a less spontaneous way than a lecturer, preacher, or conversationalist, would have been more likely to have looked up such references to ensure correctness and consistency. Luther, on the other hand, often relied primarily upon his own memory in this regard, and, to judge from the Table Talks, which appear to be very much the product of free flowing casual discussions, with no reference books handy for consultation, we have every reason to believe that his memory was phenomenal, although not perfect.⁵²

Luther also refers to passages from specific rhetorical works of Cicero, such as *De inventione* 1.5.6: "It is the special distinction of orators, as Cicero says, to speak appropriately" (WA 2,663). In *Von den Conciliis und Kirchen* (1539), Luther quotes from *De oratore* 1.11.47 (WA 50,587). In his *Auslegung* of Psalm 101, Luther recounts approvingly an episode retold by Cicero in *De oratore* 2.18.75 in which the great African general Hannibal is lectured about warfare by a philosopher who knows nothing at all about the subject. Hannibal rejects the philosopher as an old fool; Cicero praises his response, and Luther wholeheartedly approves (WA 51,208).

49 See the discussion in Springer, *Luther's Aesop*, 14–15.

50 See, e.g. WATR 1,387 and 439; WATR 1,233; and WATR 3,24. Luther frequently cites the Ciceronian tag: *Non putaram* (*De officiis* 1.23.81; LCL 30,82), but feels free to change the person and number of the verb as the context requires.

51 Sihler, "Luther and the Classics," 263.

52 No doubt there are even more classical allusions and references in Luther's writings than have been previously recognized. For a list of classical references in the *Tischreden* that the editors of the WA failed to identify, see Löfstedt, "Notizen zu Luthers Briefen und Tischreden," 20–22.

Luther was quite familiar with the principles of classical rhetoric.⁵³ Such knowledge may have been drawn directly from his reading of Cicero's speeches or handbooks on rhetoric or, as is more likely, indirectly from his study of Quintilian or other sources. Early on especially, Luther was much taken with Quintilian. "I really do prefer him to nearly all authors," Luther writes Spalatin in a letter of 1519 (WAB 1,563), and even though this expression of enthusiasm is perhaps hyperbolic, it is surely no accident that *Institutio oratoria* was adopted as a textbook at the University of Wittenberg in 1518. In *De servo arbitrio*, Luther asks Erasmus a rhetorical question, using the figure of prosopopeia to invoke the spirit of Quintilian:

If Quintilian were to set out to write about oratory and would say: "In my judgment, all those foolish and frivolous things about *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *pronuntiatio*, should be left out; it should be enough to know that eloquence is experience in speaking well," would you not laugh at such a practitioner of the art?⁵⁴

It is clear from this reference that Luther knows (and appreciates the value of) the five traditional categories of rhetoric; he assumes that Erasmus would be as scornful as he of such reductionistic impatience with detailed articulation of rhetorical theory.⁵⁵

Luther was aware of the figures and tropes so often taught by rhetoricians over the centuries and their Greek and Latin nomenclature, and he applied them frequently to his own biblical exegesis.⁵⁶ Of Augustine's translation of the verb *meditari* in Psalm 1:2 as *garrere* ("to chatter") for instance, Luther declares that it is "a really beautiful metaphor" (WA 5,34). In *De servo arbitrio*, Luther refers to prosopopoeia and antiphrasis (irony).⁵⁷ In his Lectures on Deuteronomy (12:1) Luther finds an example of synecdoche, and in his commentary on Isaiah (1:7), a variety of metonymy (*continens pro contento*).⁵⁸ In his commentary on Isaiah (22:18) we find Luther identifying a simile; in Isaiah 29:2, he describes an example of paronomasia as *agnominacio*; in Isaiah 47:1, he finds an apostrophe.⁵⁹ Of one of his favorite verses in one of his favorite psalms,

53 See Ockel, "Martin Luther und die rhetorische Tradition," 114–126.

54 WA 18,614.

55 Later in the same treatise, Luther quotes from the preface to *Inst. orat.* (LW 33,97).

56 Matheson, *Rhetoric of the Reformation*, 115.

57 LW 33,187 and LW 33,69.

58 LW 9,125 and LW 16,13.

59 LW 22,179; LW 16,239; and LW 17,146.

Psalm 118:18 (“The Lord has disciplined me severely, but he has not given me over to death”), Luther says that it is “a masterpiece,” whose rhetorical effect is achieved by *tapinosis* and *interpretatio*.⁶⁰ Ecclesiastes 7:13 (“Consider the work of God: who can make straight what he has made crooked?”) is said to help conclude the whole preceding section “with a beautiful closing statement” (*pulchro epiphonemate*).⁶¹ In his exegesis of Galatians, when Luther wants to point out that Paul is anticipating an objection, he uses the Latin terms *occupatio* or *praeoccupatio*.⁶² Elsewhere, Luther refers to the figures of allegory, alloecosis, antonomasia, ethopoeia, and heterosis. This is just a random sampling, to be sure, and, as Junghans has suggested, there are doubtless many other references to rhetorical terminology that have yet to be identified.⁶³

It is possible, of course, for a keen student of the written and spoken word to know a great deal about Ciceronian rhetoric without actually pursuing a Ciceronian style himself. Luther could and did write in the classical Latin style favored by Erasmus and other northern humanists, but it was certainly not always “Ciceronian” in any strict sense of the word.⁶⁴ This said, early on in Luther’s career it does seem that he was quite interested in pursuing a distinguished Latin prose style.⁶⁵ In a letter to Erasmus (WAB 1,361-3), for instance, we find Luther using the copious style for which Cicero was so well known, complete with figures such as polyptoton, correction, alliteration, epiphora, simile, metonymy, metaphor, tricolon, and others. Consider, for example, this short, but highly worked, passage from the beginning of the letter:

Toties ego tecum fabulor, et tu mecum, Erasme, decus nostrum et spes nostra, nec dum mutuo nos cognoscimus, nonne monstri hoc simillimum? imo

60 WA 31.1,157. Luther also identifies *tapinosis* in Galatians 4:3 (LW 26,362).

61 WA 20,139. Luther also identifies the same figure in his commentary on Gal. 4:7 (LW 26,389). On the figure of epiphonema, see Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 8.5.11.

62 WA 40.1,286 and 642. Cicero calls the figure *anteoccupatio* in *De oratore* 3.53.205. Luther also uses the term *antipophora* (usually *anthypophora*); see Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 9.2.106.

63 Junghans, “Luther’s Development,” 3.

64 While Luther demonstrates far less interest than the “Ciceronians” in using the same words as Cicero in the same way the ancient author did, we do find him complaining in a letter of 1532: “I am completely absorbed in translating Ecclesiasticus. I hope that within three weeks I will be liberated from this grinding drudgery (*pistrinum*)” (WAB 6,382). Here Luther uses *pistrinum* in a transferred sense, as Cicero does in *De oratore* 2.33.144, to mean not a mill, but the kind of mindless, tedious work that goes on there (see LW 50,72).

65 As Timothy Dost, *Renaissance Humanism in Support of the Gospel*, has suggested, especially in Luther’s correspondence with other humanists, he was at some pains to write in a careful, elegant style.

non monstrum, sed plane quotidianum opus. Quis enim est, cuius penetralia non penitus occupet Erasmus, quem non doceat Erasmus, in quo non regnet Erasmus?

That I speak with you, and you with me so often, Erasmus, our glorious hope, even though we have never met, is this not a very odd thing? But actually it is not odd at all, but something clearly that happens all the time. For who is there whose inner sanctum Erasmus does not seize, whom Erasmus does not teach, in whom Erasmus does not reign?

Note the rhyme (*tecum ... mecum*) in the first sentence, the correction (*imo non ...*), the repetition of Erasmus's name at the end of three successive clauses (epiphora), the elaborate example of polyptoton, consisting of four-fold variations on the interrogative pronoun (*quis, cuius, quem, quo*), and the tricolon pattern of the rhetorical question.

The most conspicuous example of Luther's command of classical Latin may well be his *De servo arbitrio*, written in response to Erasmus's *Diatriche de libero arbitrio* of 1524. In his opening lines, Erasmus had suggested that in taking on the vehement Luther he was at a distinct disadvantage; he felt like "a fly attacking an elephant." Luther begins his treatise, too, on a self-deprecating note, disparaging his own "barbaric" verbal facility and congratulating Erasmus on his unique ability to focus on one of the key theological questions of the day (*unus tu et solus cardinem rerum vidisti*). Shrewdly, Luther plays up his adversary's Protean abilities to avoid being pinned down in debate:

Itaque nec multitudine negociorum, nec rei difficultate, nec magnitudine eloquentiae tuae, nec timore tui, sed mero tedio, indignatione et contemptu, seu (ut dicam) iudicio meo de tua diatribe, impeditus est mihi impetus respondendi, ut illud interim taceam, quod tui perpetuo similis, satis pertinaciter observas, ne non ubique lubricus et flexiloquus sis, ac Ulysse cautior, inter scyllam et Charybdim tibi videris navigare, dum nihil vis assertum, rursus tamen assertor videri (WA 18, 601).

And so it is neither my many obligations, nor the difficulties presented by the subject matter, nor the greatness of your eloquence, nor my fear of you, but rather sheer boredom, anger, and contempt, or, if I may say so, my considered judgment of your diatribe, that has slowed down my impulse to answer you, to say nothing of the fact that you consistently manage, as is always your wont, to be slippery and ambivalent in every respect, and you seem, more carefully than Ulysses, to sail between Scylla

and Charybdis, while you try to assert nothing, even as at the same time you seem to be assertive.

In this long, hypotactic sentence, whose first clauses are characterized by anaphora and polysyndeton (*nec ... nec ... nec ... nec*), followed by an example of litotes (*ne non*) and polyptoton (*assertum ... assertor*), Luther compares Erasmus and his argumentative talents to Ulysses, the cunning navigator who managed to sail between Scylla and Charybdis, and to Proteus, the Greek sea deity who was able to change shape at will.

Luther embraces a theological position here that contradicts a key tenet of Erasmian humanism, but that does not mean that his Latin must be unrefined. Medieval “barbarisms” and solecisms are scrupulously avoided; sentences are carefully crafted, classical allusions are employed judiciously and abundantly. To be sure, throughout the treatise Luther does set himself in stark opposition to Erasmus, contrasting his own firm commitment to “our cause” and his own “delight in making assertions” with Erasmus’s studied reserve and condescending rationality. Erasmus is like “Lucian or someone else from Epicurus’s herd” who “laughs secretly at those who believe and confess” (WA 18,605). Luther concludes, assertively: “The Holy Spirit is not a skeptic, and he did not inscribe doubtful thoughts or mere opinions onto our heart, but rather assertions more sure and reliable than life itself and every experience.” (There is an emphatic rhyme at the very end of this phrase: *certiores ... firmiores*.) Luther did not reply to Erasmus’s response to his response, the *Hyperaspistes* (“Shield bearer” or possibly “Asp-treader”) of 1526, and the break between the two thereafter was decisive and permanent.

Luther’s style here and elsewhere has been often judged to be exclusively “assertive and monologic,” but in fact, Luther could be self-deprecating, appreciative of ambiguity, and, as Thomas Conley has observed, quite capable of “managing uncertainty.”⁶⁶ Luther’s Latin style in *De servo arbitrio* is clear and vigorous, but in his engagement with Erasmus and his thought, he is sometimes deferential, even playful, but hardly ever “monologic.” Luther is rarely unassertive, but he is never dully pedantic. Indeed, as Christian Kopff has recently argued, in some respects Luther comes across as a more attentive reader of the classics in the *De servo arbitrio* than the famous Dutch humanist does in his *Diatribes*. Erasmus fails to reckon with “the tragic vision of human nature found in important works of the humanist curriculum,”⁶⁷ while Luther puts forward his arguments against human freedom with illustrations drawn not just from Scriptural and patristic authorities but also from pagan sources like

66 Conley, *Rhetoric in the European Tradition*, 120–124.

67 Kopff, “Virgil and Augustine,” 50.

Virgil, whose hero Aeneas is driven against his own desires by the will of the gods and the power of Fate to found Rome.

Another example of Luther's Latin prose style: the opening lines of his famous *Tractatus de libertate Christiana*, written in 1520 by Luther in Latin and German versions. While the Latin prose is not strictly Ciceronian by any means, we should note that it is written with considerable attention to rhetorical effect, even as Luther disavows "elegance" and sets out to write "more substantially" (*solidius*) than those "clever" (*subtiles*) debaters who have tackled this topic heretofore. Luther directs his remarks to unsophisticated (*rudibus*) readers whom he claims to serve exclusively, but Luther prefaced the treatise with an open letter addressed to Pope Leo X, himself a highly educated humanist. The opening passage of the treatise follows:

Facilis res multis est visa Christiana fides, quam et non pauci inter virtutes ceu socias numerant, quod faciunt, quia nullo experimento eam probaverunt, nec quantae sit virtutis unquam gustaverunt, cum fieri non possit, ut bene de ea scribat aut recte scripta bene intelligat, qui non spiritum eiusdem urgentibus tribulationibus aliquando gustarit. Qui autem vel paululum gustavit, non potest unquam satis de eadem scribere, dicere, cogitare, audire: fons enim vivus est saliens in vitam aeternam, ut Christus Iohan. 4. appellat. Ego autem, quanquam de abundantia non glorier sciamque quam sit mihi curta suppellex, spero tamen nonnullam guttam fidei, magnis et variis agitatae tentationibus, me consecutum posseque, si non elegantius, certe solidius de ea dicere quam literales illi et subtiles nimirum disputatores hactenus disseruerunt, sua ipsorum non intelligentes. Quo autem faciliorem viam rudibus (nam iis solis servio) aperiam, duo haec Themata praemitto de libertate et servitute spiritus:

Christianus homo omnium dominus est liberrimus, nulli subiectus.

Christianus homo omnium servus est officiosissimus, omnibus subiectus. Haec quanquam pugnare videantur, tamen, ubi convenire inventa fuerint, pulchre facient ad institutum nostrum (WA 7,49).

Christian faith seems to be an easy matter to many, which not a few number among the social virtues, which they do because they have never put it to the actual test and have never tasted how great a virtue it is, since it is not possible to write well about, or to understand that which has been written well about it, if you have never tasted the spirit of faith in times of pressing trials. But he who has had just a little taste of it, is never able to write, speak, think, or hear enough about it; for it is a living fountain springing forth into eternal life, as Christ calls it in John 4. But I, although I can take

no pride in my great abundance of faith and know how small my supply is, nonetheless I do hope that I have been given a drop of faith, assailed as I have been by great and varied trials, and that I can speak about faith, if not more elegantly, well then certainly more substantially, than those scholars and far too clever debaters who have held forth on the subject previously, not understanding what they themselves have written. But to open up an easier road for the unlearned, for I serve them alone, I preface my remarks with these theses about the freedom and the bondage of the spirit:

The Christian man is the freest lord over all, subject to none.

The Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.

Even though these theses may seem to be in conflict, nonetheless when it is discovered that they converge, they will serve our purpose beautifully.

Luther's style here is certainly closer to the hypotactic, periodic style of Cicero's prose than to the clipped sentences and paratactic diction of the Vulgate with which he was so familiar. The first sentence is some 50 words long and contains three relative clauses, two causal clauses, an indirect question, and a result clause. There is a complex interlaced pattern of repetition in the first sentence, too, that is surely no accident: *ut bene de ea scribat aut recte scripta bene intelligat*. The adverb (*bene*) is repeated with two different verbs (*scribat* and *intelligat*) and the verb *scribo* appears as a finite verb and as a participle (*scribat/scripta*). The next sentence features a spectacular asyndeton: *scribere, dicere, cogitare, audire*. Luther uses the familiar metaphor of "taste" three times in the first and second sentences with a different form of the verb each time (polyptoton): *gustaverunt, gustarit, gustavit*. The following sentence offers up a *captatio benevolentiae* in the form of a self-deprecating metaphor: Luther says that he has but a "drop" (*guttam*) of faith, continuing the imagery of the previous sentence where Luther refers to Jesus's description of himself as the source of living water (John 4:10–14). The antithetical conclusion of the paragraph (just before the last sentence which explains the effect) is brilliant rhetoric. It is as biblical, perhaps, in its parallelistic construction as it is Ciceroian, but nonetheless it is highly effective. The first three words, the fifth, and the last are the same in both sentences: *Christianus homo omnium; est; subiectus*. The fourth, sixth, and penultimate words are dramatic opposites: *dominus/servus; liberrimus/officiossimus; nulli/omnibus*. The reader is presented with a compelling statement of a paradox; to discover Luther's solution to the problem he has raised, there is little choice but to continue reading.⁶⁸ The entire treatise has recently been analyzed by Timothy Wengert as constructed along

68 For an intensive rhetorical analysis, see Stolt, *Studien zu Luthers Freiheitstraktat*. For other rhetorical analyses of selected works, see Junghans, "Rhetorische Bemerkungen," 97–128

the lines of a traditional five-part Ciceronian oration, complete with an *exordium*, *narratio*, *confirmatio*, *confutatio*, and *peroratio*.⁶⁹

The issue of Luther's rhetorical knowledge and ability is complicated by the fact that he often disparaged his own verbal facility.⁷⁰ In *De libertate Christiana*, for instance, he warmly embraces his self-assigned mission "to serve the unlearned" and suggests that it is for them alone that he writes, although it is unlikely that many of them would have been able to understand the language in which he claims them as his intended audience. The German version of the treatise is dedicated to Hieronymus Mühlpfordt, mayor of Zwickau, whom Luther describes as a "learned and wise gentleman."

One suspects that Luther might actually have embraced Nietzsche's description of him as an intellectual "barbarian" (of the "northern" variety).⁷¹ Indeed, "barbarous" is a term that Luther readily applies to himself. In a letter to "that most learned man, of the most refined erudition," Konrad Mutian, he calls himself "that rustic Coridon" and "barbarous Martin," and dismisses himself as one who "tends always to honk amongst the geese." How many "rustic" contemporaries would have recognized the reference to "Coridon?" How many would have been able even to read Luther's letter? Corydon is a literary creation of Virgil; he wins a singing contest with another shepherd in the seventh Eclogue.⁷² In an age that flourished "with literary geniuses," which could put even Cicero himself to shame (*etiam Ciceronem cogere possit ad angulum*), Luther represented himself humbly "as a goose among the swans" (WA 1,529). Martin of Tours, after whom Martin Luther was named (he was baptized on the saint's day, November 11), was famously associated with the geese among whom he hid as he tried to avoid being ordained. Despite his own self-identification with a goose here, Luther was held by his own followers to be the "swan" whom Jan Huss (his surname is the Czech word for goose) is said to have predicted would follow him.

In one of his later Table Talks (1540), Luther declares of his own style that it is not Ciceronian or elegant: "I can write literary things, but not Ciceronian

(Luther's *Dictata super Psalterium*); Dähn, *Rede als Text* (Luther's 1519 sermons on the sacraments); and Burnett, "Rhetoric and Refutation," 284–303 (Luther's "That These Words Still Stand Firm").

69 Wengert, "Luther's *Freedom of a Christian*," 1–21. Perhaps as Wengert has also suggested, the same Ciceronian structure could be applied to the way in which the 95 Theses "flow," even though they are numbered in the traditional academic fashion with no explicit indication of the usual Ciceronian speech divisions.

70 See Wolf, "Luthers sprachliche Selbstbeurteilungen," 349–370.

71 Springer, *Luther's Aesop*, 6.

72 WAB 1,40–1. Luther also describes himself as *barbarus in barbarie semper versatus* in the opening lines of *De servo arbitrio* (WA 18,600). See my discussion in *Luther's Aesop*, 17.

and oratorical, the way Grickell [Johann Agricola] does. However, I do have the substance of things (*res*), even though my words (*verba*) are not expressed in elegant Latin" (WATR 4,595). In 1518, Luther declared of himself: "I am unlearned, ignorant by disposition, devoid of education." He complained more than once about the quality of his own education which did not feature the kind of humanistic training that he insisted upon for his own students: "Yes, I am sorry now that I did not read more of the poets and historians, and also that nobody taught them to me. Instead I had to read the devil's dung, the philosophers and sophists, at such expense, work, and damage to myself that I have had plenty to do just trying to wipe it off" (WA 15,46).

Not infrequently Luther reminded his audiences that he came from peasant stock and that he lacked verbal sophistication and training, but we need not take such self-deprecation entirely seriously. Consider, for example, Luther's summary of the respective speaking and thinking abilities of four reformers (including himself): *Res et verba Philippus, verba sine re Erasmus, res sine verbis Lutherus, nec res nec verba Carolostadius* ("Philipp has words and substance; Erasmus, words without substance; Luther substance without words; Karlstadt neither substance nor words").⁷³ Luther's assignment of both *res* and *verba* to Melanchthon reflects the high regard in which he held the impressive talents and abilities of his junior colleague. But it is not at all the worst thing, rhetorically, to be blessed, as Luther claims to be, only with *res*. In fact, by formulating the comparative situation as he does, Luther has managed not only to compliment his friend and colleague, but also to ensure that he himself is assigned that most important element in traditional rhetorical theory, *res*. The proper *verba* are guaranteed to follow, automatically as it were, according to wise old Cato, provided the speaker holds fast to the *res* in question (*rem tene, verba sequentur*). Because Luther does indeed have a solid grasp of the theological substance, he, too, no less than Melanchthon, is blessed with both *res* and *verba*.

There can be no question, actually, that Luther was one of the most verbal men who ever lived. If we can imagine a spectrum of wordiness, Luther's theology is at the far opposite end from the apophatic theology and the valorization of silence associated with Hesychasts such as Gregory Palamas, the monks of Mount Athos, or the Carthusians of the Middle Ages.⁷⁴ Ulrich Bubenheimer has described Luther as "word possessed."⁷⁵ It is estimated that he averaged some 20 publications per year during his literary career, not counting his

73 WATR 3,460. See the discussion in Hahn, "Res sine verbis," 130–143.

74 For an overview of the long and rich tradition of silence in Christianity, see MacCulloch, *Silence*.

75 Leroux, *Luther's Rhetoric*, 12.

letters or his translation of the Bible. Over 20 percent of pamphlets published in Germany between 1500 and 1530 were authored by him alone.⁷⁶ And, of course, he lectured and preached (often as many as four times on a Sunday) at a prolific rate (WATR 3,655). In fact, the self-deprecating protestations on the part of this accomplished rhetorician must themselves be understood rhetorically.⁷⁷ Ironically enough, it is precisely by downplaying one's own speaking or writing abilities in advance that one may improve the chances for successful rhetorical outcomes. There may even be an inverse relationship. Luther liked to represent himself as a man of the people whose language was essentially artless, animated entirely by the powerful thoughts that produced his equally powerful words, but like any other authorial persona, even one that abjures rhetoric needs to be constructed rhetorically.⁷⁸ *Ars est celare artem* ("it is an art to conceal art") is a Latin maxim.⁷⁹ So, while Luther may not always be judged to be all that Ciceronian, he is never unrhetorical. Indeed, his rhetorical self-deprecation can itself be seen as an expression of a time-honored (and effective) rhetorical strategy, *rhetorica contra rhetoricam*.⁸⁰

Even if Luther parted company with many other humanists in his pronounced reluctance to pursue a strict or even modified Ciceronian style, he acknowledged that stylistic distinctions among Latin authors like Cicero, Virgil, and Horace existed, and that preferences for one over the other were valid (WA 49,228). He respected the instinct among sensible Ciceronians to follow a pure Latin prose style in accordance with Erasmian principles, not just adhering mindlessly to "the rules of grammar and word usage." Of such neo-Latin stylists in a letter of 1537 he declares: "I approve the more those who want to seem Ciceronian and to be praised as such" (WAB 8,177).

Certainly Luther did appreciate specific aspects of the Roman orator's theory and practice of public speaking. Take, for instance, Cicero's advice on how to make one's discourse genuinely moving. Mere eloquence, if it is not the product of true feeling on the part of the speaker, will come across as cold and artificial. No matter how correctly and eloquently Erasmus could speak or write, according to Luther, his discourse failed in the final analysis to move the listener or reader, because if one wishes to move others, it is necessary first

76 Kolb, *Martin Luther as Prophet*, 19. For other estimations of his literary productivity, see Haile, *Luther*, 167 and 371–372, and Dieck, "Luthers Schaffenskraft," 35–39.

77 In his letters and elsewhere, Luther can be quite self-derogatory, referring to himself as a "maggot-sack," "mouse dung," "ripe shit," etc. See Cortright, "Poor Maggot-Sack."

78 Stolt, *Rhetorik des Herzens*, 29.

79 Cf. Ovid, *Met.* 10.252 (Teubner 1977, 237): *ars adeo latet arte sua*.

80 See, e.g., Bishop John Jewel's *Oratio contra rhetoricam* (1548).

to be moved oneself (*ipse moveatur*): “He [Erasmus] can prate really well, but his words are constructed, not organically developed. When a sermon is constructed, it sounds like something patched together and altogether frozen. This is why Cicero said, ‘There is no better way of moving others than to be moved yourself first.’”⁸¹ The effective proclamation of the pure, evangelical teaching of what the church believes, no matter how true that may be, still depends heavily on the *ethos* of the one who is proclaiming that truth. Without personal winsomeness and credibility, a preacher’s words will be of little benefit. And, of course, the words must be accepted by faith on the part of the individual believer. It is not enough that the Gospel be simply understood at a purely intellectual level. Luther believed in the objective power of the Word of God in preaching and in the sacraments to forgive sins, but he also insisted that such forgiveness had to be appropriated by faith on the part of the believer.⁸² And faith, unlike knowledge, is an emotion, a word that has at its root the Latin verb *movere*, one of the three aims of classical rhetoric. Faith and the communication of “faith to faith” (cf. Rom. 1:17) in Luther’s theology is a matter not only of *intellectus* but also of *affectus*.⁸³

Luther also appreciated Cicero’s fine sense of discretion. The skilled Roman rhetor knew how to downplay that which is undesirable and to emphasize that which is worthwhile. This particular rhetorical talent is important for maintaining peace, and it is one of the reasons Luther “loves” Cicero:

Look at all the books which do nothing except denigrate marriage and pick away at its unseemly aspects; to this purpose they apply all their rhetoric and art, unlike Cicero who teaches in his rhetoric that we should disguise and cover up unseemly things and make the most of those things which are seemly. That’s why I love Cicero—and it is a necessary precept; otherwise how would peace be maintained in the world (WATR 6,261)?

81 WATR 2,41. Goethe makes much the same point in *Faust* I.544-5: *Doch werdet Ihr nie Herz zu Herzen schaffen, / Wenn es Euch nicht von Herzen geht*.

82 As to how the water of baptism has the power to forgive sins, for instance, Luther answers his own question in his *Small Catechism*: “How can water do such great things? It is not the water indeed that does them, but the Word of God which is in and with the water *and faith which trusts the Word of God in the water*” (emphasis my own) (*Enchiridion. Der kleine Katechismus D. Mart. Lutheri*, 6,516).

83 Leroux, *Luther’s Rhetoric*, 20. For the important role that preaching played in creating a sense of emotional investment in the cause of the Reformation on the part of parishioners, see Karant-Nunn, *Reformation of Feeling*.

Cicero's habit of speaking deliberately and with emphasis impressed Luther. Especially for those who are preaching, a dedication to *tardiloquentia* will encourage greater thoughtfulness and precision: "Speaking slowly is most fitting for the preacher, because he can make his sermons more carefully thought out and precise. And Seneca writes of Cicero that he himself spoke slowly and emphatically, as we see is the case with Doctor Pontanus" [Gregor Brück, chancellor of electoral Saxony and a speaker at the Diet of Augsburg] (WATR 4,420).

Luther discussed preaching quite theoretically and analytically, applying to it technical terms (e.g., *thesis* and *status*; WATR 3,148). He thought deeply about the difference between spoken discourse (*viva vox*) and its written counterpart, making the same point as Paul (2 Cor. 3:6) about the fixed (or "dead") quality of the written word in comparison to the "hidden energy" of lively oral expression:

For, as the teachers of the Latin language write, it is one thing to speak Latin idiomatically and quite a different thing to speak it correctly.... Anyone can learn German or another language much better by using what he learns from conversations at home or in the marketplace or from a sermon than from books. The letters of the alphabet are dead words, but oral speech consists of living words which do not translate into written form as genuinely or well as the spirit or soul of man can express them orally. As Saint Jerome writes in his Prologue to Demosthenes and Aeschines and Livy: "The living word has a certain kind of hidden energy" (WA 54,74).

In one of his Table Talks, Luther said that there were "many eloquent preachers who say much but teach nothing, who are words without substance" (*verba sine re*). To this Melanchthon responded: "All ages have had Thrasons like this, for it is written that when Cicero heard an extraordinarily loquacious man holding forth, he said: 'Never have I heard somebody say nothing with so much authority.'"⁸⁴

For Luther, as for Cicero, true rhetoric could never simply be mere verbiage, a matter of style which could easily be divorced from the substance with which it is connected. Luther's rhetoric is theological, and his theology is rhetorical. His God is *Deus loquens* ("a speaking God"), whose relationship with human beings is mediated through his word, which is sown like seed, as a parable of Jesus puts it (Luke 8:15), and takes root in the soil of the human heart.

84 WATR 3,471. Thraso is a "braggart soldier," quite full of himself, who appears in Terence's *Eunuchus*.

If Luther had to choose between splendid words with little substance as opposed to crudely expressed verities, there is no question which he would prefer. He has no use for words without substance, showy eloquence for its own sake, speech that is not informed by truth or that obscures it. "Words should be fitted to the substance," and not vice-versa (*verba ... ad rem ducenda sunt*; WA 42,195). But this was Cicero's position, too. The ideal, for Luther as for Cicero, is *res et verba*. The two do not have to be at odds with each other. It is true that eloquence unsupported by wise counsel is detrimental, and also that wisdom all by itself can be effective, but when *res* and *verba* are joined together they can be very powerful complements of each other.

If rhetoric is the art of using *verba* effectively for persuasive purposes, dialectic is the component of the medieval trivium most often associated with *res*, that is to say, the substance or ideas or argument expressed in those words. How did Luther regard these two ancient liberal arts and their relationship with each other? According to Luther, "dialectic teaches while rhetoric moves. The former has to do with the intellect; the latter with the will" (*Dialectica docet, rhetorica movet. Haec pertinet ad voluntatem, illa ad intellectum*). Dialectic names, clarifies, and defines what it is that is to be taught, but it is rhetoric that the preacher employs to bring his listeners to believe and heed the word which he preaches. To this end he will use examples, similes, and other "flowers of speech." The realm of *exhortatio*, Luther explains, belongs entirely to the orators. The speaker should say with deep emotion to his audience: "Oh, I would very much like you to follow and believe me" (WATR 2,359). And his audience will respond emotionally. While Luther likens faith to dialectic, "which conceives the idea of all the things that are to be believed," he considers rhetoric, "which amplifies, urges, persuades, and exhorts," to be more akin to hope (WA 40.2,28).

Luther's attitude towards the *ars dialectica* is not entirely simple. On the one hand, it is clear that he had a high regard for dialectic. In fact, he once described Christ himself as "the best dialectician" (*der beste Dialecticus*): "So now the Lord Christ and the pope each has his own church, but there is a huge difference between them, which Christ himself, the best dialectician, in this passage [John 14:23] describes for us, in terms of what the church is and where it is, namely, where his Word is preached clearly and purely" (WA 47,777). Luther was himself a formidable debater and thoroughly trained in the arts of logic and argumentation. He boasted that even though he was unable to match Erasmus's command of rhetoric, he could best him in argument. In his *Open Letter on Translating* (1530), Luther touts his abilities in dialectic: "I know their own dialectic and philosophy much better than all of them put together. And in addition I know for sure that not one of them understands their Aristotle" (WA 30.2,635).

At the same time, Luther had deep suspicions regarding dialectic, especially the way it had been used in the practice of theology in the later Middle Ages, as he states in one of his early letters to Spalatin (1518):

But you ask to what extent I think dialectic useful for a theologian. I really do not see how dialectic would not do a real theologian more harm than good. Perhaps it could be useful as a game or exercise for young minds, but when it comes to studying the sacred scriptures, where unadulterated faith and heavenly enlightenment are requisite, every syllogism has to be excluded, just as Abraham left the servant boys behind with the donkey when he was going to make a sacrifice Now if there is any need for dialectic, one's own natural, native dialectic is enough, by which a man is ready to compare things that are believed to be true with other things that are believed to be true and in this way to come to true conclusions (WAB 1,149-50).

Dialectic is subject to abuse, as Luther notes critically of Cicero's use of the logical device called *reductio per impossibile* in the *Pro Milone*: "It is nothing else than twisting the words of one's adversary to use against him" (WATR 3,359). The abuse is especially prevalent when the two disciplines of rhetoric and dialectic are practiced in isolation from each other. They are distinct *artes*, to be sure, but they are interrelated and should never be separated. A rhetor cannot teach anything of substance (*nihil firmi docere potest*), if he does not use dialectic. By the same token, a dialectician cannot move his listeners without rhetoric. "If a rhetor does not have dialectic, then he is a wind-bag. If he is nothing more than a dialectician, he cannot admonish. But a rhetor who has dialectic, he can do something; that's alive" (WA 40.2,27). Especially for preachers, both rhetoric and dialectic can be powerful allies, according to Luther, when they are joined together:

A preacher ought to be a dialectician and a rhetor, that is to say, he ought to teach and to exhort. But the one who is going to teach about a topic should first select it; secondly, define it; thirdly, adduce relevant Scripture passages; fourthly, adorn it with examples from Scripture or elsewhere; fifthly, illuminate these words with similar ones; sixthly, reprove the wicked, the immoral, the lazy, etc.⁸⁵

85 WATR 2,368. See Grün-Oesterreich and Oesterreich, "*Dialecticia Docet, Rhetorica Movet*," 25-41, and Maaser, "Rhetorik und Dialektik," 25-39.

Luther makes this cooperative relationship clear in an introduction to a *dialectica* written for his son in 1540. As an educational tool, rhetoric's aim is to adorn, expand, explain, and make vivid the arguments that have been developed by dialectical methods. Paul himself uses both rhetoric and dialectic in his epistles, and he justifies the use of both in Romans 12:7–8. Luther complains that this cooperative relationship had never been explained to him when he was in school: "There they stand, dialectic and rhetoric! But nobody had convincingly taught us boys (or our teachers) that dialectic and rhetoric were to be found in the Epistle to the Romans or in Cicero. We thought that *Plato currit* or *homo loquitur* [parts of syllogisms taught in the schools] was what dialectic was all about." The best way to teach dialectic or rhetoric, Luther continues, is inductively rather than deductively. One should offer students examples from a Ciceronian oration or from an epistle of Paul, and then let them figure out intuitively how they work best together: "In that way you can easily learn to understand the rules." Luther concludes: "So, once dialectic has performed its function, then it is rhetoric's turn. It adorns and persuades" (WATR 4,647–9).

Optimus Philosophus

Luther had a high regard not only for Cicero's rhetorical abilities and teachings, his *verba*, if you will, but also for the substance (*res*) of what it was that he had to say: his opinions, his ideas, his wisdom. Luther often uses superlatives to describe Cicero's philosophical accomplishments. He is a very wise man (*sapientissimus*), one of the wisest among all the pagans.⁸⁶ Cicero expresses his views "outstandingly" (*egregie*) and "magnificently" (*magnifice*).⁸⁷ He is "highly experienced" (*expertus*) and "the best debater among the philosophers."⁸⁸ When Luther praises the doctoral theses of his colleague Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, he can think of no higher praise than to declare that they are "more amazing and worthy of respect" than Cicero's *Paradoxa* (WAB 1,94). Luther considers Cicero to be the "best philosopher" (*optimus philosophus*).⁸⁹

Cicero himself seems to have considered himself a philosopher first and an orator second (see Plutarch, *Life of Cicero* 32.5). It was his moral teaching and authority that guaranteed his high standing in the thought of the church

86 E.g., WA 20,46 and 48; WA 40.3,217 and 244; WA 43,173; WATR 4,14 and 187.

87 WATR 3,186 and WA 42,349–50.

88 WA 20,31 and WA 39.1,74–5.

89 WATR 3,698. See also WA 47,465 and WATR 5,312 for other positive assessments of Cicero's philosophy.

fathers and in the Middle Ages, not simply his eloquence. Among the early modern humanists, Luther was by no means the only one to rate Cicero's philosophy so highly; Petrarch preferred him even to Plato.⁹⁰

There are more references in Luther's works to Cicero's philosophical writings than to his speeches or his writings on rhetoric. The philosophical works of Cicero with which Luther would have been most familiar, to judge from the WA indices, include: *De senectute* (WA 1,139; 5,167; 20,114 and 193; 40.3,524 and 562-3; 56,24; WAB 5,439); *De natura deorum* (WA 19,380; 39.2,32-3; 40.3,319-22 and 538; 42,482; 45,526); *Tusculan Disputations* (WA 8,413; 39.2,32-3; 40.1,459; 40.3,485,494,608; 44,388); *De amicitia* (WA 20,146; 40.3,75; 42,474);⁹¹ *De re publica* (WA 39.2,32; 40.2,524; 42,94); *De officiis* (WA 3,481; 40.3,607; 51,361); *De legibus* (WA 39.1,179; 39.2,32; 42,93); *De finibus* (WA 42,482); *De divinatione* (WA 44,388); and *Academica posteriora* (WA 39.2,32).

Until fairly recently, historians of philosophy were less inclined to agree with Luther's superlative judgment of Cicero as a philosopher than with Mommsen's negative assessment of Cicero's intellectual capabilities and philosophical achievements as "journalistic" in the worst possible sense of that adjective. According to the renowned ancient historian, Cicero was a rank amateur, who tried "to write up rhetorical and philosophical topics" in a literary format that was a combination of "textbook and storybook." The works that he produced are "hardly passable."⁹² Even those scholars who regard Cicero's philosophical contributions favorably, like Neal Wood, acknowledge that he has often been considered "a mediocre philosopher, unoriginal and eclectic." Wood observes: "Cicero fails to develop an original philosophical position. His philosophical outlook is derivative and eclectic."⁹³ These kinds of pejorative judgments were especially likely to be made by those historians of philosophy seeking to understand the Greek sources upon which Cicero drew; they considered the Latin author as something of an obstacle to their own quest to track them down.⁹⁴

Ironically, without Cicero's efforts to translate the ideas of these earlier Greek precursors and present them in a fresh, Roman setting, it is unlikely that many of them would have enjoyed as full or long a *Nachleben* as they have. There are

90 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 588.

91 In WA 43,500 Luther refers to the friendship between Cicero and his trusted confidant Atticus, to whom *De amicitia* is dedicated.

92 Begemann, "Damaged Go(o)ds," 247.

93 Wood, *Cicero's Social and Political Thought*, 11 and 58.

94 In the nineteenth century, those German scholars who did study Cicero were mostly interested in trying to peer "through the muddy mind of the Roman dilettante into the clear depth of noble Greek thinkers" (Begemann, "Damaged Go(o)ds," 248).

now in current scholarship welcome exceptions to the kind of disparagement to which Mommsen subjected Cicero's contributions to philosophy, especially when it comes to reassessing his contributions in the area of natural law.⁹⁵ Cicero's philosophy was indeed heavily dependent upon his Greek precursors such as Plato and Aristotle, but while the issue of originality carries great weight for most modern sensibilities, this was surely not as important a criterion for the evaluation of philosophical effectiveness in the premodern world. Certainly Cicero's unabashed eclecticism did little to diminish the enthusiasm of Luther for the Roman philosopher's "derivative" teachings.

As a student at the University of Erfurt, Luther's own nickname was *philosophus*, and even as a mature theologian he continued to be quite interested in the ancient philosophers and what they taught. While Luther was quick to point out that superior wisdom comes from Scripture alone, he cheerfully acknowledged the "genius, learning, and industry" of pagan philosophers (WA 18,651). He was, to be sure, vociferous in his sustained critique of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, whom he referred to punningly as *Erzstultus*, the "arch-fool," because his thought had had such a deleterious effect on late medieval theology.⁹⁶ At the same time, however, Luther could pair Aristotle and Cicero together, with no pejorative judgment of either, and speak of them both as "outstanding authors" (*insignes auctores*; WA 2,662).

One reason Luther so respected Cicero's thought is because this "dear man" taught the immortality of the soul and laid out natural, moral, and rational philosophy "in a serious way" (WATR 3,698). Luther regards Cicero's discussions of the immortality of the soul as "elegant" (like Plato's) and deems them "the very best considerations" (WA 39.2,14). He "far surpasses Aristotle," in Luther's judgment, insofar as he writes most brilliantly "about the soul and its immortality" (WATR 3,451). Cicero's industrious devotion to finding out the truth about monotheism was one of the reasons Luther was moved to suggest that God, the "just judge," would find a place for Cicero in paradise:

95 Powell (*Cicero the Philosopher*, 1) speaks of a "renewed interest in Cicero as a philosophical writer" only as "a phenomenon of the last ten or fifteen years." Simpson, *When Reason is Not the Devil's Whore* (forthcoming), examines the role natural law plays in Cicero's and Luther's moral thought.

96 On Luther and Aristotle, see, among others, Dieter, *Der junge Luther und Aristoteles*, and Andreatta, *Lutero e Aristotele*. For Luther's ambivalence about philosophy and its possible effect on later philosophical traditions, see the essays collected in Dragseth, *The Devil's Whore*.

He [Cicero] worked sedulously to find out what God is, and he even got to the point where he could establish that there is only one God. Very well then, God is a just judge. He will treat such people well, because I do not believe that Cicero should be as severely condemned as Caiaphas; as he sits in the lowest part of hell, Cicero will be in paradise (WA 5,413).

In one of his Table Talks, Luther declares that Cicero got "very close to Christian thought" in his teaching about morality and metaphysical matters:

I cannot help wondering why they now praise the philosophy of Aristotle so much more than Cicero's, a man who was deeply engaged in a busy life, as evidenced by his *Officia*, which is far superior to the ethical books of Aristotle, a man with lots of leisure time and money. Cicero deals with things of substance, Aristotle with dialectic. The former got very close to Christian thought in a number of areas, to which his deliberations about the soul, the nature of the gods, etc., give evidence. Of these things Aristotle was ignorant and did not touch on as Cicero did (WATR 2,456).

Unlike the Epicureans who led men "from eternity to temporality," Cicero was possessed of a higher *ingenium* and reckoned that "it was safer to trust in the verdict of eternity than in temporality" (WATR 4,187). Luther also preferred Cicero to Aristotle because the former took the question of a creator seriously, whereas Aristotle taught that the universe had always existed (WA 42,408).

As a teacher of morality, Luther considered Cicero to be one of the more "sensible philosophers," to be placed in the company of "Aesop, Aristotle, Plato, Xenophon, and Cato."⁹⁷ These are the pagan teachers whose works should be introduced to "uncultured and wild natures" so that "their vicious urges can be controlled." In one of his later Table Talks (WATR 4,612), Luther says of Cicero that he taught his ideas quite clearly (*perspicue*). Nowhere were Cicero's teaching talents more evident than in his treatise on moral duties which he wrote for his son, *De officiis*. Luther calls it "a valuable book"; if he were himself still young, he would devote himself to this work, without, of course, abandoning his firm grounding in the Holy Scriptures.

It was no accident for Luther that Cicero's works had survived the ravages of previous ages, and that their value was rediscovered in his own. Luther considered it providential that God had preserved "such heathen books as those of the poets and historians like Homer, Virgil, Demosthenes, Cicero, and Livy"

97 WA 42,374. Luther is thinking here of Aristotle's basic works on rhetoric, logic, and poetry, and "Cato's" *Distichs*. See also WA 53,390.

which instruct their readers in “worldly wisdom.” For their own historical times and circumstances, Cicero and other pagan wise men were the divinely ordained equivalent of the “prophets, apostles, theologians, or preachers” of the Bible and the church, given to the world by God himself to provide clear moral direction to the “heathen and the godless” (WA 51,242-3).

Luther’s fascination with Cicero from the very beginning, it seems, had always had something to do not only with what the Roman rhetor said and wrote, but how he lived his life. In his preface to an edition of Luther’s works in Latin published in the year of his death (1546), Melanchthon observes that when Luther as a schoolboy read Latin authors (Cicero’s name comes first in the list), he did not read them as the usual youngster was wont to do, “just picking out (*excerpentes*) words,” but rather was able to draw from these authors’ works “teachings or illustrations *about human life*” [emphasis my own]. This is why, according to Melanchthon, Luther “paid close attention to the advice and opinions contained in these writings,” and thanks to his remarkable powers of memory, “kept them in the forefront of his mind as he read and listened to them over and over again” (CR 6,157).

Luther’s keen interest in the relationship between classical authors like Cicero and “human life” endured to the very end of his own life. On a table in his room in Eisleben after he died, a note was found written in his own hand in which Luther uses Cicero’s letters to illustrate a larger point:

No one is able to understand Virgil in his *Bucolics* and *Georgics* if he has not been a shepherd or a farmer for five years. No one understands Cicero in his epistles correctly if he has not been involved in the affairs of some important state for twenty years. Let no one think that he has tasted enough of the Holy Scriptures, if he has not governed the churches with the prophets for a hundred years. This is the reason why the miracle first of John the Baptist, secondly of Christ, and thirdly of the apostles, is so amazing. “Do not challenge this divine *Aeneid*, but rather fall down flat and worship at its feet.” We are beggars. This is true.⁹⁸

Luther is thinking here about the difficulty of really understanding the Scriptures. Diligent study alone, he suggests, is not enough for a full appreciation. (Luther himself had spent countless hours of his own life reading, translating, expounding, and preaching the Bible.) His point here is that no amount of study can replace the value of actual experiences offered by life itself, if one

98 WATR 5,317-8. See Kytzler, “*Vive precor*,” 257-268, and Bayer, “Vom Wunderwerk Gottes Wort,” 258-279. For another version of Luther’s final note, see WATR 5,168.

is to understand the Scriptures fully. Just so, by analogy, one must really know something about agricultural processes and procedures if one is to read Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* aright. Anyone can read up on topics such as animal husbandry, viticulture, and beekeeping, but no amount of scholarly research will make up for actual experience, if one wishes to understand Virgil's works deeply. Cicero's letters, too, are so steeped in the affairs of the Roman republic to which he dedicated his life, that unless the reader himself "has been involved in the affairs of some important state for twenty years," he will never fully appreciate them.

What makes John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles so amazing in Luther's estimation is that they are apparent exceptions to this rule; they had little formal education but were, all the same, astonishingly astute interpreters of the Old Testament. At the age of 12, Jesus was found in the Temple by his parents, teaching the teachers (Luke 2:41–52). Indeed, some of his disciples (e.g., John and Peter) were themselves thought to be directly responsible for writing parts of the New Testament.⁹⁹

In other words, with his dying breath, practically, the man who spent a decade (1535–45) lecturing on one book of the Bible alone (Genesis) at the University of Wittenberg is suggesting that it is impossible to prepare oneself to read anything deeply and correctly, especially the sacred scriptures, by dint of study alone. Instead, Luther proposes that it is the years of experience spent in actually living life, as a shepherd, farmer, or administrator of state, that makes one a truly perceptive reader of texts devoted to those subjects. Even then, it is a humbling experience to try to read any great book. Here Luther quotes a line from Statius, an epic poet in his own right, in which he humbly pays his respects to the greatest epic masterpiece written in his own language, the *Aeneid*.¹⁰⁰ Just so, the reader of the Bible must admit, in awed respect for the sacred text that is far greater than he, that he is nothing more than a beggar. He may have been able to pick up a few exegetical scraps here and there. In using the first person plural pronoun at the end of his observations, Luther appears to be indicating that he, too, is still unable to approach the greatest text of all, the Holy Scriptures, from any sort of superior position, despite all of his experience and expertise: *Wir sind bettler. Hoc est verum.*

99 By "apostles," Luther has in mind presumably the twelve disciples of Jesus, some of whom were unlettered fishermen, unlike Paul, a learned Pharisee, who had studied the Torah at the feet of the celebrated rabbi Gamaliel.

100 Luther is quoting freely here from the final lines of Statius, *Thebaid* 12.816–7 (OCT 1965): *nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta, sed ... vestigia semper adora*. Luther has *pronus* instead of *semper*.

It is difficult to imagine ancient classical texts that spring more quickly to mind when discussing shepherding or farming than Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* respectively. But when it comes to involvement in the affairs of a great state, Luther might have picked any number of other classical texts to illustrate his point rather than Cicero's letters. One thinks of Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Politeia* in Greek, or even Cicero's *De re publica* in Latin. Why does Luther choose to include Cicero's letters in this sequence of literary works that begins with Virgil's earlier poems (the *Eclogues*, followed by the *Georgics*), and culminates with his last great literary achievement (the *Aeneid*)? It would seem that any non-Virgilian element at all might represent something of an intrusion here.

Why Cicero? And why this diverse collection of letters, not all of them studied artistic masterpieces like the literary epistles written by Horace (in verse) and Pliny? Cicero was an avid correspondent; hundreds of his letters survive, collected by his slave Tiro, addressed to some of the most important personages of his age, including Julius Caesar and his close friend (and publisher) Titus Pomponius Atticus. That these were not all intended to be made public we may gather from the degree of candid self-revelation present in many of them. Some are very short. Cicero's letter to one of the conspirators after Caesar's assassination (*Ad fam.* 6.15; LCL 230,86) was written in haste, no doubt, and it is only nineteen words long: *Tibi gratulor, mihi gaudeo; te amo, tua tueor; a te amari et, quid agas quidque agatur, certior fieri volo.* ("I congratulate and rejoice within myself; I love you and am concerned for your cause; I want to be assured that I am loved by you and to be informed as to whatever you do and whatever is done.") Other letters are little more than chatty exchanges with his friend Atticus, or they deal with quite mundane matters, like his family's welfare while he is in exile (*Ad fam.* 14.1). Still others portray Cicero in a less than flattering light. One, addressed to the historian Lucceius (*Ad fam.* 5.12; LCL 205,158), in which Cicero advises him not to be afraid to "adorn" the truth "more extravagantly" than he might otherwise be inclined to do as he describes Cicero's achievements during his consulship, and even to "neglect the laws of history," is particularly embarrassing. Taken as a whole, however, this body of letters does give the reader a remarkably candid and wide-ranging view of the most important events in one of the most momentous periods of human history, as seen from the perspective of one who not only viewed them from afar, but actively participated in them and even helped to shape them.

Since the point here is the importance of experience for reading texts fully, it could be observed that Virgil, who was not really a practicing shepherd, or a farmer, or a warrior, but rather a poet, is himself something of a "miracle" in just this respect. How could he write so well about matters in which he was not

fully versed, matters which his readers could not fully comprehend without years of appropriate experience? Cicero's example actually fits Luther's point better. He had been involved in the governance of the Roman state for years, even decades; he had not just talked or written about doing so. It is this vivid "hands-on" perspective visible everywhere in Cicero's letters that many of his humanist admirers found so gripping. These letters were not set literary pieces but pointed rhetorical vehicles with which a powerful statesman wielded his personal and political will. More than any brilliant political treatise about the ideal state written in the abstract, Cicero's letters written over the course of so many years (from 68 to 43 BC) testify most eloquently to all of the hard, daily effort that Cicero had put into trying to govern the Roman republic.¹⁰¹

Perhaps Luther referred to Cicero's letters in this, what is possibly the final paragraph he ever wrote, because he too was a busy man who wrote letters, many of them right up to the end of his life, some of them filled with theological heft, others, like those addressed to his wife, fairly brief and even mundane.¹⁰² Luther's *Briefwechsel* takes up twelve volumes in the Weimarer Ausgabe. We have over 2,500 of them that have survived, many in Latin, three times as many as the letters (approximately 800) of Cicero which have come down to us. Like other reformers Luther wrote letters not only for personal correspondence, but also to communicate his opinions with other theologians as well as with princes and ecclesiastical potentates. Late in life, Luther was busied more and more with trying to govern the newly emerging Lutheran church. Many of these later letters, the equivalent of our modern memoranda, deal with relatively picayune matters that required his administrative attention. In fact, his final words about Cicero's letters were written while he was away from

101 Zielinski observes how important Cicero's letters were for the Renaissance humanists, whereas the Enlightenment paid more attention to his political writings and speeches. Some of the fundamental scholarly work on the letters was done by Boissier, *Cicéron et ses amis*. For a negative evaluation of the letters, see Carcopino, *Les secrets de la correspondance de Cicéron*. Carcopino concludes his book with the remarks: "These are the Letters which, laying bare the good lawyer for bad causes, the greedy businessman, the bad husband and selfish father, having failed in each of his pretensions to statesmanship, finally bar the path to any attempted rehabilitation" (quoted by Levy, "Ancient Texts, Contemporary Stakes," 205). More recently, Shackleton Bailey's editions and translations of the letters to Atticus and *Epistolae ad familiares* (in the Loeb series) represent the fruits of "the greater part of his scholarly career" (Altman, "Introduction," 7). See Hutchinson, *Cicero's Correspondence*, for a comprehensive bibliography.

102 When away from home, for example, Luther complains about the quality of the beer, not brewed by Katie, that he must drink (see WAB 7,91).

home, trying to resolve a dispute between two brothers having to do with a contested legacy.

In one of his Table Talks, Luther quotes Cicero on losing one's train of thought, as he complains how difficult it is to maintain one's focus in the midst of so many preoccupations:

Doing many things and doing them well are incompatible. It is impossible to hold on to a train of thought when occupied by all sorts of different activities, and Cicero complained that he could not easily recover an idea when interrupted. It's a miserable thing in this life! Those who live in idleness and wealth do not want to do anything; for others poverty and different kinds of busy obligations get in the way.¹⁰³

If it was, as Luther suspects, Cicero's dedication to a life in politics that prevented him from reaching the lofty philosophical heights achieved by other philosophers (like Aristotle) who spent no time at all holding public office, this is not necessarily, at least for Luther, the ex-friar, to be judged as a deficiency at all. Far from it; the kind of dedication to civic engagement displayed by Cicero was a virtue that Luther would go so far as to term "truly heroic":

Among the Gentiles there were great and outstanding men, Xenophon, Themistocles, Marcus Fabius, Attilius Regulus, Cicero, Pomponius Atticus, and many others endowed with outstanding and truly heroic virtues, who administered their commonwealths very well and achieved much in a most splendid way for the well being of the commonwealth (WA 40.1,543).

Cicero's name is included in this list of civic heroes, but Aristotle's is not. However astute Luther may think Aristotle was, and "superior" to Cicero "because of his praiseworthy intellect," he still prefers Cicero to Aristotle when it comes to practical wisdom (*prudentia*; WA 42,408). Luther declares emphatically that there is "more philosophy in one book of Cicero than in all the works of Aristotle," basing his judgment on the fact that Cicero "was willing to speak up and address issues squarely," whereas Aristotle preferred to remain detached (WATR 1,73).

Aristotle and other philosophers like Epicurus, in Luther's mind, were fatally associated with the dangerous idea that the contemplative life is more

103 WA 3,689. On the humanists' appreciation for Cicero's sense of civic responsibility see, fundamentally, Baron, "Cicero and the Roman Civic Spirit," 72–97.

conducive for the pursuit of virtue than the active life. Epicurus's advocacy of cool, dispassionate detachment put Luther in mind of monasticism and Erasmus. What made Cicero so admirable to Luther is the fact that he was so pre-occupied with so many tasks. He was a "man full of cares and civic burdens." It is precisely in this regard that, as far as Luther was concerned, Cicero far surpassed Aristotle, "the leisured ass, who had more than enough money and time on his hands." Even though Aristotle was "the best and most astute dialectician," he did not preserve the substance of "real philosophy." For that, Luther declares, "one should read Cicero" (WATR 2,456-7).

Luther included Cicero in the company of the noblest of the pagans, who not only taught about wisdom but lived it out in their lives. Even without the Law of Moses to guide them, these noble pagans were a kind of law unto themselves (see Romans 2), and Cicero and the other "best men" sought "wisdom and justice" according to their own lights (WA 38,541-2). From these pagan exemplars, Christians could stand to learn much. Indeed, Luther asks Erasmus: "When it comes to native wit, learning, or industry, what Christian is there who can be compared to Cicero alone, to say nothing of the Greeks" (WA 18,651)?

So, Luther's respect for Cicero as a *philosophus* was based on the fact that he was a true "lover of wisdom" (this is the original meaning of the Greek word), who saw philosophy as a kind of preparation for death (*Phaedo* 61c-69e), not necessarily because he demonstrated the ability to expand the frontiers of knowledge as Plato and Aristotle had. Wisdom is applied knowledge, it could be said, and Cicero lived his life wisely, in accordance with the knowledge he learned from others, most especially the ancient Greek philosophers whose works he studied himself and helped to make accessible to his contemporaries. Cicero's capacity for original thought was not as important to Luther as how well Cicero lived—and also, as we shall see, how well he died.

Parrhesiastics

From the Reformer's perspective, the idea that in order to be a true Christian one needed to retreat from the busy, chaotic world of love, family, affairs of state, manual labor, theological disputation, and even war, was simply abhorrent. Activities such as the pursuit of truth, the contemplation of the good, or trying to please God, were not best pursued alone or in the quiet community of fellow ascetics or scholars, as Luther had once vainly attempted to do in the Augustinian monastery in Erfurt. The truly "happier life," Luther argues in his poem lampooning Martial's Epigram 10.47, is one that imitates the Psalmic model of a father surrounded by wife and children, all of them busy obeying

God's commands (Psalm 128). In fact, Luther himself got married and fathered children. The hardships involved with managing a household, living with a spouse, and rearing children replaced the ascetic habitudes of life in monasteries and convents so long regarded by many in the medieval church as the "training ground of virtue and the surest way to heaven."¹⁰⁴ Instead of enjoying a life of monastic solitude, as he might have, Luther became deeply involved in the political life of Wittenberg, Saxony, and the Holy Roman Empire. He seems to have enjoyed the challenges his busy life presented him, but he also underwent much suffering that he might have avoided if he had remained in the Erfurt monastery his entire life.

To become a real theologian, according to Luther, one must seriously pursue the following: *oratio* ("prayer"), *meditatio* ("contemplation"), and *tentatio* ("adversity"). By this last word he meant that one must embrace, not shy away from, the wide variety of experiences, some painful, into which the devil, "the prince of this world," thrusts one.¹⁰⁵ For Luther and his contemporaries, the *tentationes* of the devil were a constantly present spiritual reality to be taken most seriously. Luther may not actually have thrown an inkwell at Satan, as the legend has it, but he did hurl plenty of scatological abuse in his direction. He also believed that music had an extraordinary power to drive away demonic forces of gloom and sadness.¹⁰⁶ While Luther's negative attitudes toward the devil have been frequently noted in recent scholarship,¹⁰⁷ we should point out that Luther was quite grateful to the devil, insofar as it is he, not God, who "tempts" human beings. Comparing his own deeply intensive theological development with that of shallow "fanatics," Luther observed that they had not had the benefit of the "real critic, the devil." He even went so far as to call him a good teacher (*der lernet einen wol*; WATR 1,146). The continued activity of the devil helps to account for the persistence of evil in a world designed to be "very good" by its divine creator (Gen. 1:31), but he also performs a service that can turn out to be anything but evil.¹⁰⁸ Christians need *tentatio* to mature theologically. In this respect, then, Satan is not just a rebellious and powerful

104 Marriage, for Luther, was "a school for character" (Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 286).

105 Kleinig, "*Oratio, Meditatio, Tentatio*," 255–268.

106 The adjective describing "the prince of this world" in Luther's famous chorale, *Ein' feste Burg, is sauer*. For more on music's ability to put the devil to flight (*fugat diabolum*), see Leaver, *Luther's Liturgical Music*, 93.

107 See, for example, Oberman's comprehensive study, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*.

108 Suffering, as the ancient Greeks understood it, has a possible positive purpose: humans may be able to learn valuable lessons from it. See Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, 177: *pathei mathos*.

counterforce to God, but a submissive angel, who is sent among human beings not only to afflict them (see, e.g., the Apostle Paul's "thorn in the flesh"), but also to carry out God's gracious and overarching will. Paul prayed to be relieved of his affliction, "a messenger of Satan" sent by God to "buffet" him (2 Cor. 12:7), but, as it turned out, God's grace was "sufficient" for him. Throughout his life, in a variety of contexts, Luther continued to stress how much the development of his own theology owed to his painful experiences fighting the devil, the pope, and even his fellow reformers.

The Cicero whom Luther respected so was a man who had suffered greatly, who had experienced his own full measure of *tentationes*. It is this Cicero who might possibly deserve a place in heaven, not a contemplative intellectual or talented wordsmith who only thought and wrote and taught about life rather than living it. Far from being a philosophical recluse, Cicero was a model of *urbanitas*; that is to say, he devoted himself wholeheartedly to the moral and political welfare of his community and all for which it stood. Luther praises him because as a legislator he did "very good things" for his nation (WA 40.1,222). Cicero's letters from exile are filled with heartfelt expressions of bitter longing to be back in the heart of the busy civic life of Rome. He was a man whose life revolved around civic action. "All of the glory of virtue," as Cicero himself declared, is determined by what one has done (*in actione*), not by what one has said (*De officiis* 1.6; LCL 30,20).

Luther's Cicero, then, is the public orator, a wise and busy man who loved to be at the center of the political stage where he might use, to the best advantage of the *res publica*, not his military prowess or even his political connections but his command of the Latin language, his wisdom and learning, to move his fellow citizens to a better state of mind and being. As Cicero himself describes the orator's leading role in civic affairs in *De oratore* 3.31.122 (LCL 349,94-6): "For this whole realm of wisdom and learning is ours, if now we are orators, if in civil disputes, if in trials, if in public debates we are to demonstrate ourselves to be leaders or major players—it is ours, I say." It is this rhetorically active Cicero, a man of letters who was prominently "involved in the affairs of some important state," who was on Luther's mind at the end of his life, as he wrote his final note, looking back on his own busy life, his intensive engagement, like Cicero, with *verba* and *res*.

In what he has to say of Cicero throughout his writings, Luther does not discuss many of the actual details of Cicero's governance, how exactly he managed the Catilinarian conspiracy as consul in 63, his loyal dedication to Pompey even after Caesar crossed the Rubicon with his troops in 49 and entered Rome, his support, after the fact, of the conspirators who assassinated Caesar in 44, and his vocal opposition to Mark Antony. Even though he knew in general how

Cicero met his end, Luther does not retell the particulars of the moving story of Cicero's death at the hands of Antony's soldiers.

Doubtless, much of Luther's knowledge of Cicero's career and writings was gained when he was in school, and his engagement with primary sources thereafter was almost surely more indirect than direct.¹⁰⁹ We should not overlook, however, the amount of time Luther spent in the company of fellow humanists, especially Melanchthon, far more scholarly inclined than he. It is quite likely that he learned as much from these conversations as from his own direct study of, let us say, Plutarch's *Life of Cicero* or even Cicero's letters and speeches.¹¹⁰ Whatever his sources may have been, whether direct or indirect, ancient or more recent, Luther knew that Cicero was brave as he faced his death: "Cicero bravely endured death in a just and good cause" (*Cicero mortem fortiter perpessus est in causa iusta et bona*; WA 40.1,219). For decades this *novus homo* had been a political striver (and survivor) as he scrambled up the Roman *cursus honorum* by dint of his own talents and efforts instead of relying on a prestigious family name, but however much he may have pursued a course of expediency earlier on, Cicero found his political backbone at the conclusion of his career, and his resistance to Mark Antony was unwavering at the very end.

Luther declares that Cicero died for "a just and good cause." Even though he does not specify, this must be a reference to Cicero's vain attempts to salvage the traditional republican model of governance, with a strong senate and consuls elected on an annual basis, based on the principle of *concordia ordinum*, the cooperation of the senatorial and the equestrian classes, rather than the more efficient monarchical arrangement of power preferred by Julius Caesar and his successor, Octavian. The fact that he "suffered" so much is one of the reasons Luther seems to identify for his hope that Cicero might receive favorable consideration in the world to come in a Table Talk of 1538, as we have seen: "Then he [Luther] made mention of Cicero, the best, wisest, and most hard working man, and of *how much he suffered* [emphasis mine] and accomplished. 'I hope,' he said, 'that our Lord God will also be gracious to him and those like him'" (WATR 4,14).

109 Luther does comment specifically on Cicero's hard work while he was proconsul in Bithynia to reduce the exorbitant rate of interest that was being charged there, a biographical fact gleaned most likely from his letters (Sihler, *Cicero of Arpinum*, 282).

110 There is an inexact quote from Philippics 13.1.1 in WATR 5,442. In WA 40.3,382, we find a reference to Cicero's demise in close connection with a mention of Demosthenes's flight from Antipater. The two events are compared in the concluding paragraph to Plutarch's parallel lives of the two famous orators.

In the context here, Luther has in mind not simply the ways in which Cicero suffered, as so many others have, from health issues, marital discord (Cicero eventually divorced his wife Terentia), or the loss of a child (his daughter Tullia died in 45 BC), but his suffering in connection with how much he "accomplished." It is the "hard work" of this "best" and "wisest" man that Luther respects so highly, not his deep feelings or profound thought. And, of course, the way in which Cicero set about doing the hard work for which he suffered so much was by talking and writing, not by exercising military might. Luther, too, unlike some of his fellow reformers (e.g., Zwingli and Thomas Müntzer, both of whom took up arms in support of their causes), preferred to fight his battles not literally, but from the pulpit, at the lectern, in public meetings, and, of course, on the written page.

Like famous sufferers from the Old Testament such as Jeremiah, Job, and the psalmists, Luther observes, Cicero had plenty of reason to complain of a kind of divine unfairness visited upon him, because after having done all that he could, he received such an incommensurate reward (WA 18,785). Naturally, Cicero would not have directed his complaints to Yahweh, as Job did, but he might have ascribed his unfair treatment to the goddess Fortuna who regularly advances the careers of those who are not all that wise or talented and destroys the lives of men far better than they (WA 51,244). Cicero's tragedy was that for all of his wisdom, which Luther recognizes and admires, his trust in the people of Rome to recognize and follow his wise guidance was misplaced, and his own wisdom alone could not save him:

Cicero and Demosthenes were the wisest men, who helped to establish their commonwealths in outstanding ways and wrote legislation; they also thought that their efforts would meet with a successful result. But it turned out quite differently, so much so that one of them [Cicero] exclaimed of himself: "Oh, woe is me, who never was wise, and yet once I was considered (in vain) to be that which I was not. How wrong your opinion of me was, O people of Rome!" (WA 20,46).

Cicero did not go wrong in pursuing wisdom, in Luther's view, but rather in thinking that Rome could be governed successfully by human wisdom, "without the blessing of God in heaven." It was for this reason that Cicero not only did not save the Republic with all of his good "counsel," but in a kind of tragic irony his wisdom turned into folly and actually brought about Rome's "downfall" and his own (WA 40,3,245-6). There was "as much wisdom in Cicero as in any human head," but, as Luther explains, wisdom must be applied to other men. Turning, as it were, to Cicero himself and addressing him in the second

person, he adds: “not all of whom are in your head” (WA 40.3,248). If he was unable, in the end, to persuade the majority of Romans to follow his lead and support the conspirators against Caesar rather than Mark Antony, then all of his vaunted wisdom was for naught. Such are the risks of a political life like Cicero’s.

How sympathetic Luther seems to be to Cicero’s political failure and eventual demise! He compares his frustrations with the ungrateful people he was supposed to be leading with those of other “highest men,” such as Moses and David and Themistocles (WA 45,453). Even though the heroic efforts of Cicero on behalf of the Republic were unavailing in the end, they are mentioned in the same breath as Hercules’s labors, Ulysses’s monsters, and David’s contest with Goliath (WA 20,8). In his treatise against Erasmus, Luther asks him to imagine what Cicero must have been thinking when after all he had done he received so little “reward” at the end of his life and died “a miserable death” (WA 18,785). He does not merely condemn Cicero’s folly in thinking that he could save the Roman Republic with his own wisdom instead of God’s and leave it at that. Cicero is a tragic victim in Luther’s eyes, a victim of ingratitude, the kind of treatment from one’s intended beneficiaries that “can break one’s heart,” even if nothing else does (WA 31.2,704).

Cicero is supposed by Luther to have exclaimed near the end “in a voice utterly filled with indignation and despair,” that for all that he was highly regarded as a wise man, his wisdom had been in vain (*frustra*; WA 31.2,618). Neither Cicero’s despair nor indignation would necessarily have detracted from Luther’s high estimate of him. If Cicero learned finally not to trust in his own wisdom and the reputation it had earned him and to despair of saving himself, this would have been seen as an indispensable first step to salvation by Luther the theologian. If one is ever to trust in God alone, as Luther puts it in his explanation of the first commandment in his *Large Catechism*, it is necessary first to learn not to rely on anything else, including one’s own wisdom:

He who boasts great skill, wisdom, power and influence, and friends and honors, and trusts in them, has also a god, but not the one true God. Notice, again, how presumptuous, secure and proud people are when in the enjoyment of such possessions, and how despondent when without them or deprived of them. Therefore, I repeat that to have a god, truly means to have something in which the heart puts all trust.¹¹¹

111 Dr. Martin Luther’s *Large Catechism*, 45.

That Cicero should have become indignant or angry would have actually been quite understandable, even commendable, for Luther. He once observed of himself: "I have no better remedy than anger. If I want to write, pray, or preach, then I have to be angry; then all of my blood is refreshed, my understanding is sharpened, and all attacks against me give way."¹¹² True indignation, as opposed to bemusement or mockery, belongs only to those who really believe in a standard of rectitude that must not be ignored but upheld unflinchingly.

For Luther, one of the essential qualities of a real orator such as Cicero was his brave willingness to risk everything as he used his words to push for the "just and good cause" in which he believed. When Cicero finally trained his oratorical armament directly against Mark Antony, speaking out and writing freely and fearlessly in defense of his own convictions regardless of the possible personal consequences, his words may have done nothing to change the juggernaut of history. His was a fool's errand, as it turned out, hence Cicero's despair and indignation at the end. But it is precisely at such a crisis point, one that involves great personal risk, that so many public figures, in every period of history, fail to live up to and die for the ideals that they have so often (and sometimes so loudly) espoused.

Such verbal riskiness was given a technical term in the Greek rhetorical handbooks, *parrhesia*. Literally it means "speaking everything." The Greek word has as its root *rhema*, a noun which means "speech"; from the same root are derived the words *rhetor* and *rhetoric*. The prefix *pan* in Greek means "everything." A "parrhesiast," therefore, will say anything, anywhere, to anyone, no matter the personal cost. The exercise of such free, candid speech was widely recognized as a valuable (if not universally appreciated) characteristic of brave social critics in antiquity like Socrates and other philosophers, often of the Stoic and Cynic schools, who kept on saying what they had to say to the bitter end.¹¹³

Parrhesia could also be applied to the bold declaration of the Gospel in the face of strong opposition. The Apostle Paul explicitly alludes to it (see, e.g., 2 Cor. 7:4). It is the confident expressiveness of *parrhesia* for which Paul is praying in Ephesians 6:20, and it is *parrhesia* that so often characterizes the words he spoke to powerful forces opposing it: temple authorities, Roman

¹¹² WATR 2,455-6. See Brecht, "Der Schimpfer Luther," 97-113.

¹¹³ As a rhetorical device, *parrhesia* was taught in the schools of rhetoric as a commonplace which would be regularly used to lay the groundwork and prepare the audience for just such a bold, even contrarian expression of the speaker's critical views. The device is still used (and abused) in everyday discourse (e.g., the adverb "frankly" as employed to excuse or advertise the speaker's supposed candor).

officials, skeptical Athenians, city magistrates, angry mobs, etc. For this kind of bold confession Paul eventually lost his life. Similar examples of such fearless speech abound elsewhere in the Bible and in the history of the church. One thinks of the prophet Nathan, confronting the powerful king David with the dangerous (to the speaker) accusation, “Thou art the man” (2 Sam. 12:7),¹¹⁴ or of the first martyr, Stephen, who continued to challenge the religious authorities of his day even as they picked up stones to put him to death (Acts 7–8), or of Jesus, himself, who witnessed “a good confession” before Pontius Pilate, who proceeded to order him crucified (1 Tim. 6:12–14). What is remarkable about Jesus’s own “hard sayings” (e.g., Matt. 16:24) is that he rarely if ever offers any sort of rhetorical amelioration before the fact.

Parrhesia, Paul suggests in Ephesians 6:20, is necessary if the gospel is to be spoken as it “ought” to be. Why? Because the message of the cross is not only “the power of God unto salvation” to some, but a stumbling block to others, and, therefore, a source of potential offence and great risk to the parrhesiast. The sufferings that the Apostle Paul endured, including whippings, stoning, shipwrecks, imprisonments, and eventually execution (see Paul’s own listing in 2 Cor. 11:23–33), could have been entirely avoided if he had simply stayed silent and not spoken “boldly.”

Parrhesia is one of the most conspicuous virtues of Christian martyrs and other heroes of the faith from the time of the early church to Luther’s own.¹¹⁵ Luther’s first hymn, *Ein neues Lied wir heben an*, is dedicated to two young followers, John and Henry, burned at the stake in Brussels in 1523. Unlike their fellow monks of the Augustinian monastery in Antwerp, who under pressure renounced the Lutheran teachings they had recently embraced, John and Henry refused to recant. Despite the efforts of “the old enemy” to “silence” them, the two stood firm “like a wall,” and when stripped of their monastic garb prior to immolation, they said simply: “Amen.” Although they themselves were eventually silenced, the hymn concludes, the Holy Spirit cannot keep still. The ashes of the two martyrs fly everywhere, and, despite all efforts to silence them,

114 See Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 144, on Nathan’s speech and what he calls the “rhetoric of entrapment.”

115 One of the best known examples in the early church is the golden-mouthed preacher, John Chrysostom, whose unrelenting critique of the Empress Eudoxia and other powerful dignitaries led to his banishment from Constantinople. *Parrhesia* was celebrated by his contemporaries “as the distinctive mark of a holy man, partly because it took a holy man’s nerve to talk back to a powerful member of late Roman society or his equally proud staff” (Caner, *Wandering, Begging Monks*, 144). On Chrysostom’s use of *parrhesia*, see Bartelink, “Parrhesia des Menschen vor Gott,” 261–272.

the devil has no choice but to let them "sing joyously with every voice and tongue in every place."¹¹⁶

Without such bold willingness to risk the ire of one's audience there can be no real, substantial preaching, as the fictional Father Mapple (in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*) declares in his stern sermon on the Book of Jonah: "Woe to him who seeks to please rather than to appall."¹¹⁷ In his valuable little study, *Fearless Speech*, Michel Foucault makes much the same point about the personal risk of bold speech in other contexts (such as friendship or politics):

So you see, the *parrhesiastes* is someone who takes a risk. Of course, this risk is not always a risk of life. When, for example, you see a friend doing something wrong and you risk incurring his anger by telling him he is wrong, you are acting as a *parrhesiastes*. In such a case, you do not risk your life, but you may hurt him by your remarks, and your friendship may consequently suffer for it. If, in a political debate, an orator risks losing his popularity because his opinions are contrary to the majority's opinion, or his opinions may usher in a political scandal, he uses *parrhesia*. *Parrhesia*, then, is linked to courage in the face of danger: it demands the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger. And in its extreme form, telling the truth takes place in the "game" of life or death.¹¹⁸

Cicero was not always brave. He was confronted with many dangerous situations during his life, including the Catilinarian conspiracy, but he often equivocated and did not always handle himself with fearless aplomb. In fact, Plutarch suggests that the conspirators against Caesar did not include him in their plans precisely because they did not trust his courage. After Caesar's assassination, Cicero set out for the safety of Athens in order to avoid the dangerous ire of Mark Antony, but then, according to Plutarch, ashamed of his cowardice, returned to Rome. Antony summoned Cicero to a meeting of the Senate to bestow an honor upon Julius Caesar, but, fearing for his safety, Cicero stayed

116 WA 35,411-5. For a translation of the entire hymn, see MacDonald, *Exotics*, 73-74. For an analysis, see Leroux, *Martin Luther as Comforter*, 93-100.

117 Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 50.

118 Foucault, *Fearless Speech*, 15-20. On the issue in early modern England, see Parkin-Speer, "Freedom of Speech," 65-72, and the first chapter of Colclough, *Freedom of Speech*. For a discussion of the Greek word and its Christian appropriation, see Scarpat, *Parrhesia greca, parrhesia cristiana*. Both Melanchthon and Sturm treated of the figure. My discussion owes much to Wojcich Ryzek and his paper, "Speaking Freely: Keckermann on Figure-Idea of Parrhesia," presented at the International Society for the History of Rhetoric's meeting in Tübingen in 2015.

away, citing his fatigue from travel. The very next day, however, he delivered the first of his fourteen Philippics directed against Mark Antony. It is in these final speeches, as Jon Hall observes, that “Cicero is at last his own man. His formidable oratorical powers are finally directed towards a clearly defined cause in which he fully believes.” It is “this conviction in his mission” that gives the speeches “an austere *gravitas* rarely found in earlier speeches.”¹¹⁹

These “speeches” (the second was a literary harangue) were responsible in large part for Cicero’s murder a year later. After Octavian and Antony joined together with Lepidus to form the “Second Triumvirate,” Cicero was proscribed. According to Plutarch’s *Life of Cicero* (48), he tried to escape, but his efforts at flight were in vain. When it became clear that his end was inevitable, he ordered his slaves to put down the litter in which they were taking him to the sea (stroking his chin with his left hand as he often did), looked at his potential murderers (a centurion named Herennius and Popillius, a tribune whom Cicero had once defended against a charge of murdering his father), and allowed himself to be decapitated. It was the seventh of December, 43 BC. At Antony’s command not only was Cicero beheaded, but his hands (or perhaps just his right hand) were also cut off, according to Plutarch, because he had written the Philippics with them. When these were brought back to Antony, “he gazed upon them with joy and burst into giddy laughter,”¹²⁰ and ordered them affixed to the *rostra*, the speakers’ platform in the forum from where Cicero had so often addressed the Roman people. According to Dio Cassius, Fulvia, Antony’s wife, after spitting on the head, drove her hairpins into Cicero’s tongue, a final act of posthumous revenge on the organ that had done such damage to her husband.¹²¹ Such are the perils of *parrhesia*.

It was this act of bravery specifically on the part of the Roman rhetor who was not always brave, but finally risked everything to write the Philippics, that seems to have been so especially appealing to the reformer whose own dangerous words had turned church and empire upside down, also at considerable personal risk. For Luther, as well as for Cicero, there came a time when silence could no longer be kept, as he observes in the opening lines of one of his most powerful treatises, “Address to the Christian Nobility of the German Nation”

119 Hall, “Philippics,” 302.

120 Transl. Butler, *Hand of Cicero*, 123.

121 An article on this subject by Amy Richlin is entitled simply, “Cicero’s Head.” One could imagine a possible sequel with an equally grisly title: “Cicero’s Tongue.” Our sources include Plutarch’s lives of Cicero and Antony, Seneca the Elder’s sixth *Suasoria*, and Dio Cassius (47.8.3–4). Plutarch is inconsistent on whether it was his right hand only or both hands that were removed. See Butler, *Hand of Cicero*, 1–2.

(WA 6,404). Erik Erikson describes Luther as "one of the biggest and most effective back-talkers in history."¹²² The iconic image of the single friar taking his stand at the Diet of Worms in 1521 before a powerful emperor, Charles V, and a host of dignitaries, and refusing to recant what he had written, is surely one of the best known historical examples of "the courage to speak the truth in spite of some danger."

Licentia is the Latin noun that is usually used in rhetorical handbooks to translate the Greek word *parrhesia*.¹²³ In the Vulgate the word is often translated as *fiducia* ("confidence"). There is another Latin noun that gets closer to the notion of *parrhesia* in a Lutheran ecclesiastical context, and that is *confessio*. It derives from the verb *confiteor*, which combines the root *fateor*, meaning "to speak," with the prefix *con-*, meaning "with" or "together." The basic meaning of the word "confession," therefore, includes not only the act of speaking, but also the idea that such speech is done in the company or presence of others who may well be indifferent or even hostile to confessor and confession—and who may occupy a position of greater power. The word is still used today in just this way in secular contexts, to describe a statement made to a police detective, often under considerable personal duress; in such instances it amounts to the declaration of something that one has done wrong, so it necessarily involves an element of personal risk. This is how Luther himself uses the word in his *Tischreden*, as he declares his willingness, if life and strength be given him by God, to "confess Jesus against Erasmus," his mocking adversary, even if it means that he will have "to risk dying all day long" (WATR 1,195).

The practice of ritualized individual confession, especially as it developed in late medieval Catholicism, raised serious concerns for many reformers, including Luther, not only because the practice, as they saw it, laid undue emphasis on human efforts to make amends to God, but also because it had often become compulsory and routine. In such circumstances it was all too likely that confession would become anything but free and genuine speech that reflects the truth. Auricular confession was discontinued in many Protestant denominations. In Lutheran settings private confession was encouraged, if not always practiced, while a collective, general confession was formally incorporated into many Lutheran liturgies.¹²⁴

¹²² Erikson, *Young Man Luther*, 66.

¹²³ The Greek word is also regularly translated as *palam* ("openly") in the Vulgate (e.g., Mark 8:32).

¹²⁴ See Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, 63, on the transformation of the practice of confession after the Reformation, as "it gradually lost its ritualistic and exclusive localization."

Perhaps the best known use of the word *confessio* during the Reformation was in the context of the imperial diet held in the city of Augsburg in 1530 where Lutheran theologians, led by Melancthon (Luther was not able to attend), upheld their dangerous faith in the presence of Charles v. The written statement of those distinctive beliefs and practices, including explanations of how the Lutheran faith did not depart from most traditional church teachings, was entitled *Confessio Augustana*. Centuries later the word was still being used in this sense. When Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms was cited during the Nazi period as a justification for many German Lutheran pastors and theologians of the *Reichskirche* who declined to speak boldly in the face of National Socialism and the *Deutsche Christen* movement (active in support of the Nazi cause), there was a movement of protest that included some Lutheran pastors such as Hermann Sasse and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Documents such as the "Bethel Confession" of 1933, written after the passage of the Aryan Clause on April 7, excluding Jews from civil service positions, and the "Barmen Declaration," written by Karl Barth, on behalf of "The Confessional Synod of the German Evangelical Church," were certainly good later examples of the kind of *confessio* or "risky speech" for which brave speakers like Cicero and Luther could so easily lose their lives.¹²⁵

On the recommended continuation of the practice of private confession and absolution (without an exact enumeration of sins), see *Confessio Augustana*, Art. XI.

- 125 On Sasse and his theology in general, see Pless, "Hermann Sasse," 155ff. Some of the points here I have already made elsewhere ("*Parrhesia*, Confession, and Confessionalism," 11–15).

Cicero and Wittenberg Education

Following the same educational principles which earlier humanists had advocated, Luther and his colleagues insisted on including Cicero in the curricula of schools which they founded or reformed. Their revised pedagogy featured prominently the liberal arts, including rhetoric and intensive language study, in combination with the study of the Bible and catechetics. The architects of the new Lutheran curricula regarded the ability to read Cicero's letters and speeches and to speak and write classical Latin prose as foundational intellectual skills. These could prove, they felt, exceptionally useful for young Lutherans, beginning as early as age six, to help them develop the rhetorical expertise considered so essential for the promotion of the cause of the gospel in the church, as well as when put to all sorts of uses in worldly settings, such as law, politics, etc.

The Wittenberg reformers' insistence on the centrality of Cicero in their educational program was quite intentional and, again, not simply a matter of inevitability. After all, it is not as though there was some kind of mandate that Ciceronian coursework had to occupy a guaranteed educational position in the reformed curricula by default. In fact, not all of the Protestant Reformers were interested in Latin, including Luther's senior colleague at the University of Wittenberg, Karlstadt, and others, whose opposition to the study of texts other than the Bible led to the closing of some schools in Wittenberg in 1521 during Luther's absence at the Wartburg. Even the local schoolteacher himself, Georg Mohr, advocated taking children out of school. The school building in Wittenberg was converted into a bakery for a while.¹

Humanist Education and Cicero

As an indispensable part of the liberal arts curriculum, it could be said that Cicero's works never enjoyed greater prestige and prominence than they did in the early modern period. It is true that some of his works had continued to be read widely during the Middle Ages and saw frequent use in medieval schools. Cicero is mentioned in Conrad of Hirsau's list of curriculum authors as a *nobilissimus auctor*, although of his works only *De amicitia* and *De senectute* are

¹ Brecht, *Martin Luther: Shaping and Defining*, 138.

named.² While Alexander Neckham mentions *De oratore*, *Tusculan Disputations*, and *De officiis*, there are other curricular lists (e.g., Eberhard the German's *Laborintus*) in which Cicero's name does not appear at all.³ That Cicero was not as central to the education fostered by scholasticism in the high Middle Ages as he was to become later does not necessarily mean that the educational system favored by the scholastics was inherently flawed or inferior in some way to the one that succeeded it, despite the heated protestations of Renaissance humanists to the contrary. That it was not strictly classical Latin (and certainly not Ciceronian Latin) that was studied and used during these centuries did not diminish the potential usefulness of medieval Latin prose for thousands of students who learned to employ it with some facility, nor did it prevent some of its practitioners, like Peter Abelard, from developing its unique potential for grace and beauty.⁴ In late medieval universities, also to be fair, the educational system so roundly condemned by the humanists must be judged to have been successful in what it aimed to do, namely, provide "a lively and rigorous training in logic and semantics," which was eminently well suited for those pursuing professional careers in law, medicine, and theology. There also were practical courses in Latin that successfully taught "the future estate manager, government clerk or solicitor how to keep books, draw up contracts, and write business letters."⁵

Still, there can be no question that the study of Ciceronian Latinity was given relatively less consideration in the educational programs popular in the later Middle Ages compared to what happened when the Italian humanists began to rethink education. One important reason that Cicero's stock rose with the advent of Renaissance humanism was that for most of those who valued a return to classical Latinity, Cicero had come to be regarded as the surest of guides for any student seeking to develop a more refined sort of Latin prose eloquence than the "barbarous" Latin used most often in the later Middle Ages.⁶

It is instructive to compare the high regard with which Cicero's language was held in the Renaissance with the almost worshipful way in which Shakespeare is considered today in America, some 400 years after his death.

2 On the *Dialogus super auctores*, see Whitbread, "Conrad of Hirsau," 234–245.

3 Curtius, *European Literature*, 49–50. See also Purcell, "Eberhard the German," 95–118.

4 See Leonhardt, *Latin*, 178–183.

5 Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to Humanities*, xiii. For a comprehensive overview of the varieties of Latin written during the Middle Ages and the purposes to which the language was put, see Mantello and Rigg, *Medieval Latin*.

6 Juan Luis Vives described scholasticism as "a gangrene" and a "pestilence" infecting "the minds of men for five hundred years and more" (Abbott, "Retórica y el Renacimiento," 96).

Shakespeare festivals are ubiquitous; his plays are read in high school English classes, almost always in their original language. Even so, nobody today would dream of using Shakespeare as a model for English style, to be imitated in a high school or college composition class, as Cicero was in the early modern period. Cicero was to be taught to all sorts of youth for all sorts of reasons, but especially insofar as his prose might help to shape theirs. There was an immediate, urgent, and practical applicability that the study of Cicero's Latin, now a millennium and a half (or so) removed from them, was seen to possess by humanists. It was the rigorous study of classical Latin prose in the schools that guaranteed that Cicero's Latinity was bound to be more than a private, dilettantish matter, pursued out of personal interest only or a scholarly fascination with the past for its own sake. In his course of lectures in 1465–66 on “the precepts of poetics and rhetoric,” for instance, Cristoforo Landino of Florence used Cicero's first letter to Lentulus (*Ad fam.* 1.1) as his model (instead of one of the common medieval pattern books) when giving his students instructions in the art of writing letters, “to make them easier and more accessible.”⁷

This keen interest on the part of the early humanists in the development of historically “correct” Latinity based on actual ancient models did not mean that Cicero's ethical teachings were suddenly being neglected. Most insisted that the pursuit of eloquence should never be pursued as an end in itself, divorced from moral philosophy, as Guarino da Verona points out in a lecture on Cicero's *De officiis*: “Therefore continue as you have begun, excellent youths and gentlemen, and work at these Ciceronian studies which fill our city with well-founded hope in you, and which bring honour and pleasure to you, prosperity and happiness to your friends.”⁸ For these Renaissance educators, Cicero was a great Latin stylist *and* a paragon of pagan moral virtue, whose study would bring not only “pleasure” but “honor.”

To the mind of Pier Paolo Vergerio, one of the first humanists to address pedagogical issues, Cicero was a great authority on the liberal arts and their value for education. In *De ingenuis moribus* (c. 1402–3), he cites Cicero on the importance of books when he asks rhetorically:

What way of life, then, can be more delightful, or indeed more beneficial, than to read and write all the time: for moderns to understand things ancient; for present generations to converse with their posterity; and thus to make every time our own, both past and future?... What excellent

7 Transl. in Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to Humanities*, 58. On Landino in general, see Bernuzzi's entry in *Contemporaries of Erasmus*.

8 Transl. in Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to Humanities*, 2–3.

furniture books make! As we say; and as Cicero says, “What a happy family books make! Absolutely honest and well-behaved! A family that does not fuss or shout, that is neither rapacious, voracious or contumacious.”

Vergerio goes on to point out the importance for liberal education of eloquence, “which is the one skill that most effectively wins over the minds of the masses,” whose purpose is “to enable anyone to speak well and to inspire him to act as well as possible; this is the mark of the greatest men and the absolutely finest characters.”⁹ Putting principles such as these into practice was a high priority for Italian humanists such as Vittorino da Feltre and Guarino, who established new schools at Mantua, Verona, and elsewhere.¹⁰

In *De studiis et literis*, written in epistolary form to the daughter of the Count of Urbino, Battista Malatesta in the 1420s, Leonardo Bruni, himself a biographer of Cicero and a writer of Ciceronian dialogues, assures his young reader that the study of poets and orators of the ancient world, “a combination of literary skill and factual knowledge,” will ensure the breadth of her knowledge and enhance her grace and nobility. It is clear that rhetoric is central to Bruni’s pedagogical agenda. The orators are to be studied carefully because “where else is virtue praised with such passion, and vice condemned with such ferocity?” The great orators of antiquity like Cicero “teach us how to soothe, encourage, stimulate, or deter.” Philosophers can do the same, Bruni admits, “but in some special way, anger, mercy and the arousal and pacification of the mind are completely within the power of the orator.” Bruni points to the particular efficacy of the figures of speech and thought, “which like stars or torches illuminate our diction and give it distinction.”¹¹ Literary skills alone are insufficient if they are not wedded to knowledge. Bruni points out that it was the “two joined together that advanced the glory and fame of those ancients whose memory we venerate.”¹²

Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (eventually Pope Pius II), concedes in his treatise *De liberorum educatione* that there is an abundance of orators from antiquity whose works could be read in school, but, he declares: “Cicero is the most brilliant of all and sufficiently pleasant and clear to beginners. He can not only be profitable but also loved, and I think that his books *de officiis*, are not only useful but even necessary for you.”¹³ Whatever might be missing in the

9 Transl. in Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 317–318.

10 See Woodward, *Vittorino da Feltre*.

11 Transl. in Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 336–338. On Bruni’s biography of Cicero, see Ianziti, “Life in Politics,” 39–58.

12 Transl. in Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 341.

13 Transl. in Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 350.

way of specific Christian ethical instruction could be supplied, Aeneas Silvius suggests, by reading Ambrose's *De officiis*.¹⁴

The Italian humanists of the quattrocento were by no means alone in their insistence on the importance of revising educational priorities so that the liberal arts and eloquence would be more heavily emphasized. Farther north, in the early sixteenth century, Erasmus wrote a number of influential treatises on education, including the *Antibarbari*, published in 1520, in which he makes the case for learning and eloquence against those who would prefer "saintly simplicity":

Now let us imagine two other people, both worthy men, one, uncouth, the other educated: which is to be preferred to the other? (They shuffle and stammer: just find a man, they say, who has both worth and learning.) I admit that there is a great scarcity of this kind of person, for there are plenty of unlearned and unworthy people everywhere. But why should they stammer when Jerome never did? He freely and at the top of his voice, as they say, put saintly learning above saintly simplicity.¹⁵

In his *De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis declamatio*, Erasmus excoriates parents who focus only on wealth and neglect their children's education. Many of the same points are reiterated in his advice on how to educate a prince properly, addressed to the future emperor, Charles v.¹⁶

In 1531, Thomas Elyot dedicated to King Henry VIII *The Book Named the Governor*, in which he lays out his principles for the best education for future leaders. In this, the "first treatise on education in the English tongue," Cicero (along with Demosthenes) is declared "by the consent of all learned men" to:

have pre-eminence and sovereignty over all orators, the one reigning in wonderful eloquence in the public weal of the Romans, who had the empire and dominion of all the world.... Of which two orators may be attained not only eloquence, excellent and perfect, but also precepts of wisdom, and gentle manners, with most commodious examples of all noble virtues and policy.

14 On a letter of Piccolomini written to Gregor Heimburg in 1449 and the *translatio* of rhetorical studies from Italy to Germany, see Schanze, "Problems and Trends," 110.

15 Transl. in Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 356.

16 On Erasmus's interest in using creative techniques to teach the young, including baking biscuits "in the form of letters" and using letters of the alphabet for target practice during archery lessons, see Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 29.

Elyot stresses the value of being trained to speak in public before large crowds or impressive personages so that one's words are not "sudden and disordered":

The utility that a nobleman shall have by reading these orators is that when he shall hap to reason in counsel, or shall speak in a great audience or to strange ambassadors of great princes, he shall not be constrained to speak words sudden and disordered, but shall bestow them aptly and in their places. Wherefore the most noble Emperor Octavius is highly commended, for that he never spake in the Senate, or to the people of Rome, but in an oration prepared and purposely made.¹⁷

Not all of the humanists were entirely enthusiastic about Cicero's educational value. Juan Luis Vives's *De tradendis disciplinis* (published in Antwerp in 1531) complains about "semi-learned men" who "demand from us a knowledge of Latin and Greek speech,"

such as scarcely is shown in Cicero or Demosthenes, or in any of those writers, who sucked in their language with their mother's milk, and who had the whole of the people as it were for their schoolmaster, and in those points of usage in their language as to which they were in any doubt, they could consult a neighbouring cobbler or a smith.¹⁸

The kinds of reservations expressed about the dangers of extreme Ciceronianism by Vives, Erasmus, and others did nothing to reduce Cicero's pedagogical stature. Indeed, the study of Cicero himself, who was anything but a linguistic purist, was often deemed the best antidote to Ciceronianism.

Luther's Latin House of Learning

Luther insisted just as strongly as his humanistic forbears and contemporaries did on the intensive study of Latin and Cicero in schools and universities.¹⁹

17 Transl. in Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 412–413. On the education of royalty in early modern Britain, see Pollnitz, *Princely Education*.

18 Transl. in Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 405. On Vives's distinctive reimagining of rhetoric, see Mack, *Renaissance Rhetoric*, 129–131.

19 For the early and important influence of humanism in Wittenberg, see Grossmann, *Humanism in Wittenberg*. The heading for this chapter section plays on the title of Gerald Strauss's book, *Luther's House of Learning*.

Far from repudiating the classics, or remaining neutral as to the question of whether they should be taught, leaving it to colleagues like Melanchthon to decide, Luther was personally and deeply committed to creating and handing down to future generations a refined version of a traditional liberal arts education heavily based on Latin. This point is worth emphasizing here, because it has been not infrequently obscured by Luther's hearty embrace of biblical studies and Christian catechesis, his oft-expressed hatred of Aristotle, and his public break with Erasmus on the question of free will. While it is true that most recent Luther scholarship has been quite ready to acknowledge his kinship with humanism, even in the late 1980s it was still possible for Benjamin Kohl to claim that the Lutheran Reformation was responsible for "the repudiation" of humanism, because of its stress on the importance of producing piously educated public figures and clergymen rather than simply teaching the classics for their own sake.²⁰ That such an unnuanced perspective fails to do justice to the complex nature of Luther's attitude toward the teaching of the classics or the realities of Lutheran education will become clear in the following pages.

Luther played less of a direct, hands-on role in setting up a standardized curriculum for Lutheran schools than his colleague, Melanchthon, but the import and effect of Luther's insistence on the liberal arts and Latin for schooling purposes should not be underestimated. In fact, it seems all the more significant from our vantage point precisely because it could have been far less enthusiastic than it was. Anything less than whole-hearted endorsement from the undisputed leader of the Lutheran Reformation might very well have spelled an early doom for Cicero in subsequent Lutheran educational programs. It is doubtful that Melanchthon's support alone would have been able to guarantee any sort of sustained continuance for Latin and Cicero, especially given the rise of "anti-Ciceronianism" later in the sixteenth century.²¹

Luther was quite clear in stating his beliefs that liberal education was not detrimental or even incidental to theology, but of vital, central importance.²²

20 Kohl, "Humanism and Education," vol. 3, 19.

21 There have been numerous scholarly studies devoted to Luther and Melanchthon as educators. These include Bruce, *Luther as Educator*; Mühlaupt, *Die Reformatoren als Erzieher*; Grimm, "Luther and Education," 73–142; Rosin, "Reformation, Humanism, and Education," 301–318. See also the individual chapters by Grane, Kittelson and others in Harran, *Luther and Learning*. For relevant sources for the period 1530–1600, see Reu, *Quellen zur Geschichte*.

22 On the connection between theology and pedagogy for Luther in general, see Asheim, *Glaube und Erziehung*, and Liedtke, *Theologie und Pädagogik*; see also Harran, *Martin Luther*, 166.

While he changed his mind or modified his ideas about many other things throughout his tumultuous career, his views on the indispensable value of liberal learning for the success of the Reformation remained constant throughout his life. As late as the winter of 1542–3, Luther could say of the importance of schools for the church: “When schools are growing, then things go well and the church is safe. Let us call more doctors and masters. The young are the seedbed (*seminaria*) of the church, a fountainhead. When we are dead, where would others [like us] come from, if there were no schools?... God has saved the church through schools; schools preserve the church” (WATR 5,239). And the schools Luther had in mind were those that would teach the “commendable liberal arts,” developed by “outstanding, learned people.” Whether or not these educational pioneers were “heathen” he did not care, since these arts “serve a useful purpose in this life,” regardless of their origin. Indeed, the liberal arts are not just human constructions, in his eyes, but divine creations, “noble, valuable gifts” of the Lord of all. It is to his divine name that the liberal arts give “praise, honor and glory.”²³

It was Luther’s conviction that his “house of learning” must not only indoctrinate young people in the truth of the everlasting Gospel but also prepare them for useful professions of all sorts, so that there would be well-educated lawyers and doctors and civic leaders, whose intelligence and eloquence would benefit society this side of eternity. He remonstrated with those who complained about the expense involved, urging them to reorder their priorities:

And do not be upset that now the common pinch-penny so thoroughly despises art that he says: “Ha, if my son can write German, read, and do arithmetic, then he knows enough; I want to make a businessman out of him!” They should be so shortly put in their place that they would be happy to dig six feet deep into the ground with their fingers to dig up a learned man. For my businessman shall not be in business long if preaching and justice collapse, of that I am sure. We theologians and jurists must continue on, make no mistake, or everything else will go down with us. When the theologians go away, God’s Word goes away, and only heathen, yes, only devils, remain. When the jurists go away, then justice disappears, and with it, peace, and nothing but robbery, murder, crime and violence, yes, only wild beasts remain. But what it will profit a businessman, and what he will earn, when peace has gone away, I shall simply allow his ledger to tell him; and what use all of his property will be to him

23 WA 48,28-9 (written by Luther, according to a marginal note, in a volume of Homer).

when preaching disappears, no doubt his conscience will show him (WA 30.2, 577-8).

Human society runs the risk of descending into bestiality without the presence of those who teach the law and preach, without the benefit of “learning, wisdom, and writers”:

Wisdom is a useful teaching and necessary, for writers should rule the world and the pen should prevail. If an angered God were to remove all the learned from the world, then all the people left would surely be wild animals; there would be no wisdom, no religion, no law, but only confusion and robberies, just the way people live in the land of the cannibals, where there is no government, but instead they are beasts. The common people indeed prefer that there be no wise men, nor public speakers or administrators, so that they could live in freedom according to their own lights; but if that were so the common people would perish, because not even the Turks or the Tartars are able to live without wisdom and laws. If there are people, there must be laws. If, on the other hand, there are bears, lions, beasts, they will have no economy and government (WATR 3,11).

An education based on the liberal arts has a practical purpose, for Luther as well as for other humanist educators, and for this reason even the most pragmatic of parents and the state, too, should be eager to promote such learning wherever possible. In his sermon of 1530 on the importance of keeping children in school, Luther warns parents that God “did not give you children and the wherewithal to support them, just so that you could do whatever you want to with them or bring them up to gain the glory of the world. You have been commanded seriously to bring them up to serve God....”²⁴ In one of his Table Talks, Luther says that the uneducated stand in relation to the educated “as the dead to the living.” Education is what brings the human soul to life. He goes on to assure parents that there is “no more reliable treasure” than an education in the liberal arts for their children. Houses can burn down, property can be destroyed, but the arts are permanently embedded in the mind and heart; they are transportable (WATR 4,216-7). As he implores the German councilmen in 1524: “It is a seriously great matter which deeply concerns Christ and the whole

24 *Eine Predigt, dass man Kinder zur Schulen halten solle* (WA 30.2, 531).

world, that we assist and give counsel to our young people. For in this way we shall be assisting and giving counsel to ourselves and everyone else, too.”²⁵

In his preface to Justus Menius's *Oeconomia Christiana* of 1529, Luther calls parents who care only about training their children in order to make a comfortable living no better than wild animals, “poisonous and harmful” to society:

And as now some people say: “If my son learns enough so that he can earn money, then he has learned enough.” And nobody wants to train children for anything else now than to learn how to make a living, and they can think of nothing else at all except that they are free and have the liberty to raise their children just as they please, exactly as though there were no God who had commanded them otherwise, but rather as though they themselves were God and lord of their children. But if there were a strict, organized government in the world, and people were discovered to be so shameful and wicked that they did not want to better themselves and bring up their children any differently, then the government should punish all of them, their bodies and their property, or exile them, for such people are the most poisonous and harmful people on earth, more so than either Turk or Tartar could be. The reason for this is as follows: as much as they can, they do nothing else than undermine both spiritual and temporal conditions and ruin the training of both domestics and children, and they remain totally wild animals and pigs who are of no use in the world except to gorge themselves and guzzle (WA 30.2,61-2).

There are deleterious, long-term ramifications for the common weal of society caused by persistent lack or neglect of education. The calamitous state of affairs in Germany, Luther declares, is directly attributable to a decline in education: “The whole of Germany is a wasteland, as it were, in which there is nothing in the way of civic morality, no concern for educating young people, while laws, instruction, and the liberal arts have collapsed, and reason has no role to play in the public sphere” (WA 20,178).

Luther was particularly concerned about proper grammar instruction, which traditionally had centered on learning how to read poetic texts (see Quintilian, *Inst. orat.* 1.4.1-5). The reason why one had to study seriously the poets and orators, “regardless of whether they were heathen or Christian, Greek or Latin,” was because it is from authors such as these that “one must learn grammar” (WA 15,52). Even though the pages of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* are

25 *An die Ratsherren aller Städte deutschen Landes, dass sie christliche Schule aufrichten und halten sollen* (WA 15,30).

filled with tales of heroic violence and the amorous adventures of the Olympian gods, for young professor Luther the pagan work was more deserving of study at the University of Wittenberg than the pious writings of such venerable churchmen as Thomas Aquinas.²⁶ Despite critics like Erasmus who suggested that Lutheranism and literary studies were incompatible, Luther adamantly insisted otherwise (in a letter to Eobanus Hessus of 1523):

Obviously, the last thing I would wish to be done or planned for young people is that they give up poetry and rhetoric. What I do absolutely wish is that there would be as many poets and orators as possible, since I observe that these studies, as no other, equip people marvelously not only to comprehend sacred things, but also to handle them adroitly and successfully. Wisdom does indeed make infants' tongues eloquent; but the gift of language needs to be taken seriously. So, I beg you to beseech your youth at my behest (if it counts for anything) to practice poetry and rhetoric seriously. As Christ lives, I am quite often angry also with myself that this age and our custom of living do not permit me to take time to immerse myself in the poets and orators. I once bought myself an edition of Homer so that I might become a Greek (WAB 3,50).

Like many professors, before and since, Luther had strong feelings about what should be taught at the university where he was employed, even though instruction in the liberal arts lay outside of his own immediate field of academic expertise.²⁷ In a letter written to his close friend Johann Lang in 1518, he comments on the changes that he has already begun to bring about with the help of his colleagues. These changes, he hopes, will steer the Wittenberg curriculum in a more humanistic direction:

We expect in the very near future to have classes on both (or even three) languages [Latin, Greek, and Hebrew], Pliny, mathematics, Quintilian, and some other very good classes, once the inept classes on Petrus Hispanus [author of *Summulae logicales*], Tartaretus [author of a commentary on Aristotle], and Aristotle have been dropped (WAB 1,155).

²⁶ WAB 1,325.

²⁷ On March 11, 1518, he sent Spalatin a program for redesigning the liberal arts at Wittenberg with the ambitious hopes of "eliminating every trace of barbarism quite quickly and strengthening in a very intensive way all of our learning" (WAB 1,153-4).

The liberal arts curriculum included, first and foremost, the trivium. Scholastic pedagogy had focused less on rhetoric and more on grammar in the schools and placed a great deal of emphasis on logic at the university level. At Wittenberg Luther favored discarding Aristotle's works on physics and metaphysics, *De anima*, and the Nicomachean Ethics, even though these had traditionally been considered his most important writings in the scholastic curricular tradition, but, on the other hand, he wanted "to keep the books written by Aristotle on logic, rhetoric, and poetics." And Luther insisted that Aristotle, "just like Cicero's *Rhetorica*," be studied without the traditional medieval commentaries and glosses (WA 6,458).

The trivium was an indispensable starting point for Luther, but simply including grammar, rhetoric, and logic in the curriculum was hardly enough. It was also of the utmost importance that these traditional foundational skills be taught correctly (WA 31.2,613):

In the same way, before we were given the light of the Gospel, was the usefulness of the arts rightly demonstrated or realized? This is clear to see in the way boys were being taught. The utility of either grammar, or logic, or rhetoric was not being made evident to them, so very far away were they from being able to teach these arts aright. Now if this was the case with these trivial arts, how much more was it so with the weightier ones?

Rhetoric was not to be considered as a discrete stage of the educational process, preliminary to other studies only. Luther fully endorsed humanist pedagogical principles that stressed the continuing importance of rhetorical study throughout the course of one's education and life after school.²⁸

Luther hoped for a new kind of pedagogy very different from the one he experienced as a youngster. He describes the schools he himself attended as "a hell and purgatory in which we were martyred with cases and tenses and still learned absolutely nothing, even with so much beating, trembling, distress, and miserableness." Perhaps the energy young people eagerly devote to learning to play cards, to sing and dance outside of school, Luther suggests, could be redirected to the classroom: "Why would we not also devote just as much time to reading and other arts, while they are young and have plenty of time and are apt to learn and eager to be there?"²⁹

Luther, himself an academic by profession, not a parish pastor, valued the teaching vocation, whatever the level of instruction, highly: "A pastor and

28 See Spitz, "Luther, Humanism and the Word," 11–12.

29 WA 15,46.

schoolteacher plant and nurture very young trees and saplings in their gardens. Oh, they have a valuable office and function, and they are the most precious jewels of the church; they preserve the church" (WA 50,617). He complained often of the general lack of appreciation for educators, despite their knowledge and commitment. If Luther had not become a theologian, he would have liked to have been a schoolteacher: "And I, if I could be (or had to be) relieved of my office as a preacher and other duties, I would prefer no other office than to be a schoolmaster or a teacher of boys. For I know that this work, next to the office of the preacher, is the most useful, grand, and best of them all" (WA 30.2,579-80).

Luther thought deeply about how best to instruct children: "When Christ wished to train men, he had to become a man. If we are to train children, then we must become children with them." In what is perhaps a reference to the traditional Latin word for school, *ludus*, which can also mean "play," Luther emphasizes the notion that learning must be made enjoyable for children if it is to be truly effective: "Would God that such child's play would be well done; in a short time we would see a great treasure trove of Christian people" (WA 19,78). He recognizes the challenge of communicating with them at their own level, even if that means employing baby talk: "Because we want to preach to children, we must also babble with them" (WA 30.1,143). Of his own education, Luther complains: "There are some teachers who are as cruel as hangmen. One time I was beaten fifteen times before noon without having done anything wrong, for I was supposed to decline and conjugate and had not yet learned how to do that" (WATR 5,254). Children are most effectively educated when they become accustomed to being treated well. Otherwise, Luther argues, if teachers try to compel students to learn using only "rods and beatings, no good will come of it, and if it is taken too far they will remain pious only so long as the rod is laid to their necks."³⁰

Even though he was critical of his own instruction as a child, Luther must actually have learned a great deal about the fundamentals of Latin from his days as a schoolboy. Martin Brecht believes that Luther's "ability to think in the Latin language, to use it and to express himself in it," was something he "owed primarily to the school" at Mansfeld.³¹ Nor were the educational strategies he and other reformers suggested really all that different from those with which he had himself been trained. For instance, Luther never abandoned the traditional practices of repetition and memorization. The skills he learned during

30 WA 30.1,143. On the importance of play in education for Luther, see Sander-Gaiser, *Lernen als Spiel*.

31 Brecht, *Martin Luther, Road to Reformation*, 15.

his school days, however painfully, certainly served him well in later life. In this respect, he differed little from other educators of his day who continued to appreciate the key role of the memory “as the locus for learning, reasoning, imagination and thought.”³² No matter how kindly a Lutheran schoolmaster might be, it required some real diligence and self-discipline on the part of any student to learn a subject as difficult as Latin.

Luther was interested not only in elite education, designed primarily for boys who would go on to pursue advanced degrees in law, theology, and other disciplines, but also in more general education, including instruction designed for girls.³³

Now even if there really were no soul (as I have said), and even if we did not need schools and languages at all for the sake of the Scripture and of God, there would still be this reason that would be sufficient all by itself to establish the very best schools for boys and girls alike everywhere, namely, that in order to maintain externally its secular estate, the world still needs capable men and women: men who can govern land and people well, women who can well train and maintain households, children, and servants. Now we must develop our boys into such men and our girls into such women. Therefore, teaching and bringing up our boys and girls in the right way is something that we must do.³⁴

A school in Grimma for girls was founded in 1529 and supervised by the sister of Johann von Staupitz, Luther's former mentor while he was at the monastery in Erfurt.³⁵

32 See Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 87.

33 Vives was interested in the psychology of education and wrote a treatise *De institutione feminae Christianae* in which he suggested that all girls be educated. Girls were taught Latin privately, if not in the schools, into the eighteenth century. The founder of the *Philanthropinum* in Dessau, Johannes Bernhard Basedow, taught his daughter to speak Latin by age five (Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 247).

34 WA 15,44. In one of Erasmus's *Colloquia*, the learned Magdalia (based perhaps on Margaret Roper, daughter of Thomas More) is represented in dialogue with a certain Abbot Antonius, who is far less astute than she. The Abbot discourages Magdalia from reading Latin works. When pressed for a rationale, he admits that it is not the salacious subject matter dealt with by poets like Ovid that is his main concern, but that the church is safer when priests know no Latin. On the issue of female education in the Reformation, see Schulte, “Martin Luther and Female Education,” 437–439; Green, “Education of Women,” 93–116; and Karant-Nunn, “Reality of Early Lutheran Education,” 128–146.

35 The school does not appear to have taught Latin. See Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 193.

Luther was concerned with promoting not only formal education but also the kind of instruction which happens best at home. His edition of Aesop's fables, begun in 1530 but never finished, was designed in part to encourage fathers to use them at the family table to instruct children (and servants) in basic moral principles. In response to parental concerns that time spent at school would prevent children from working at home, Luther suggests that they spend less time at school, but that the hours that they were there be used efficiently, so that young people would have plenty of time for chores and play at home. The ultimate goal of such balanced education is a new generation of outstanding, educated citizens who can aid the rest of society:

So you say: "Yes, but who can spare his children in this way and train them all to be knights? They must stay at home and work there." My answer is that it is also not my intention to have schools set up along the lines of the ones we had before, where a boy would labor over Donatus [*Ars grammatica*] and Alexander [of Villedieu, author of *Doctrinale puerorum*] for twenty or thirty years and still learn nothing. There is now a new world and a different way of doing things. My intention is to permit boys to go to such a school for one or two hours per day and not spend any less time working around the house, learning a trade, and doing whatever they are asked to do, so that both [study and work] may go hand in hand, while they are young and have time. Otherwise, they will probably spend at least ten times that much time shooting marbles, playing ball, running, and horsing around. A girl too can have enough time to permit her to attend school for one hour per day and still take good care of all of her business at home. She most probably will waste a lot more time than that sleeping, dancing, and playing. There is only one thing missing in all of this: people do not have a serious desire to bring up young people, nor do they care about whether there will be excellent people to aid and advise the world. The devil would much rather have dunderheads and dolts, so that things do not go so well for people on earth (WA 15,46-7).

That Luther's fervently expressed convictions about the importance of the liberal arts was unfeigned is made abundantly clear in the attention he gave to his own future children's education. The young (and still unmarried) Luther observes:

If I had children and could do what I wanted, I would make them study not only languages and history, but also singing, music, and all of mathematics. For what is all of this other than mere child's play? This is how

the Greeks of old used to train their children, and it produced amazingly capable people, suited for all sorts of things thereafter (WA 15,46).

Once he had children of his own, Luther was attentive to their manner of education, especially in the area of grammar and music, as we gather from a letter written in August of 1542 to his son's tutor, Marcus Crodel, rector of the school in Torgau:

Just as you and I agreed, my Marcus, I am sending to you my son John so that you may include him with the boys who are supposed to practice grammar and music. Also, I ask you to watch how he behaves and correct him, for in the Lord I have the greatest confidence in you. I will pay generously for your expenses, and you will indicate to me how much timely progress he has made, and how far he should be pushed.... May God bless what has been begun. If I see success with this son, then, if I live, you will soon have my other two sons, too. For it is my considered view that after you there will be no school teachers as diligent as you, especially when it comes to grammar and strictness regarding conduct. Therefore, "the moment must be taken advantage of; time slips by with a quick foot" [Ovid, *Ars amatoria* 3.65], and conscientious teachers go away even faster. Afterwards, the boys will return here for higher studies at which they will be more successful. Farewell in the Lord, and tell Johann Walther that I am praying on his behalf and that my son has been entrusted to him for music instruction. For I do indeed give birth to theologians, but I also would like to produce grammarians and musicians (WAB 10,134).

Even though Luther often stressed the practical utility of education, he also saw the dangers inherent in strictly utilitarian approaches to education that stress learning only the bare minimum. He was not unsympathetic with the notion that education should be pursued not only for immediately practicable purposes but also out of sheer curiosity. In his commentary on Ecclesiastes, he writes of the "great pleasure" (*magna voluptas*) that can accompany the pure quest for knowledge,

lest we imagine the same thing as those interpreters who think that understanding nature, likewise, the study of astronomy, and even of all philosophy, are being condemned here, and who teach that they are to be despised as idle and useless speculations, when, in fact, the advantages of these arts are great and many, as we see every day demonstrated in front

of our eyes. Add to this the fact that to try to know the nature of things is not only useful, but also provides us with great pleasure (WA 20,11-12).

And in his sermon on the importance of keeping children in school, Luther points out (using the rhetorical device of *praeteritio*) that an education permits one to do all sorts of pleasant things, like enjoying reading and conversation and travel, that are not easily available to the uneducated:

I will keep silent here about what a fine pleasure it is when a man is educated, whether he ever holds any office or not, how he can read for himself all kinds of things at home, how he can converse with educated people and socialize with them, and travel and do business in foreign countries. For there are perhaps only a few people who are motivated by such a pleasure. But because, then, you are searching ever so constantly for money and sustenance, just consider here how many and how great are the goods that God has made dependent on schools and learned people, so that you do not dare despise teaching and art on the grounds that they will make you poor (WA 30.2,565).³⁶

Luther was not only a professor but what we would today term an academic administrator (dean of the Theological Faculty) at the University of Wittenberg. For this reason, and because of his personal *gravitas*, his recommendations in educational matters carried great weight both within the University and outside its walls. He wrote to the Electors of Ernestine Saxony of his concerns about all sorts of educational matters. In words addressed to Frederick the Wise, Luther assures the elector that the languages and the liberal arts, including the study of Greek and Hebrew, are thriving at the University, thanks to his generous patronage: "Who is unaware that in promoting literary study our prince Frederick has become an example to all princes? Greek and Hebrew are being pursued quite satisfactorily at your Wittenberg; the liberal arts are being taught with greater effect than Minerva ever used to be taught" (WA 5,20). In the following letter to Margrave George of Brandenburg he presses for the establishment of colleges and universities in his territories:

Secondly, it would be good if Your Grace were to establish one place (or two) for universities in your principality where not only the Holy Scriptures but also law and all kinds of arts would be taught. Learned

36 For a rhetorical analysis of Luther's sermon on the importance of keeping children in school, see Stolt, "*Docere, delectare, und movere*," 433–474.

graduates could be drawn from these schools to serve as preachers, pastors, secretaries, councilors, etc. for the entire principality. And the income of the monasteries and foundations should be designated for the purpose of supporting well educated persons with decent salaries: two theologians, two jurists, one professor of medicine, one mathematician, and four or five persons for grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, etc. For study is no good in empty cloisters and deserted monasteries and endowed churches, but should take place rather in a city, where many people come together and practice with one another and stimulate and motivate each other. Solitary study does not do anything, but studying collectively does, where many are together and provide each other with incentives and examples (WAB 5,120-1).

Luther corresponded frequently with Spalatin, the secretary of Frederick the Wise, concerning university matters. When Melanchthon arrived on campus, Luther was especially worried that his talented young colleague might get recruited elsewhere and helped to rearrange his teaching responsibilities in a way that would be most conducive to Melanchthon and thereby increase his willingness to stay permanently in Wittenberg: “Both to me and to many, my Spalatin, because of his lectures on the Apostle Paul, which he is delivering so effectively, it seems best that Philipp not be loaded down with the course on Pliny” (WAB 2,130).

As to the instruction of ancient languages and Latin in particular, we know from Luther’s 1524 appeal to the councilmen of Germany that many educational minimalists of his time, bluntly described by Luther as “beasts and mindless animals,” questioned why it was necessary to teach “Latin, Greek, and Hebrew and the other liberal arts” instead of German, “which suffices for our salvation.” Luther rails on these “German fools and beasts” who prefer to spend their money “on foreign goods,” instead of supporting the study of the arts and languages, which represent “greater adornment, usefulness, honor, and piety,” whether one is interested in gaining more biblical knowledge or learning how to administer affairs of state.³⁷

While not all students could realistically be required to master Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, Luther felt that even boys who were planning to go into a trade or learn a craft should be trained in the liberal arts and languages, so that

37 WA 15,36. Hostility to Latin is expressed in broadsheets associated with the Peasants’ Revolt. Sometimes they feature a figure named Karsthans, who represents the hardworking, undereducated peasant, armed with a hoe (Matheson, *Rhetoric of Reformation*, 102).

there would be a healthy supply of pastors and teachers in reserve should the need arise.³⁸

Luther identified *bonarum artium cognitio* as one of the essential ingredients in a theologian's education (WATR 3,312). In a letter to Helius Eobanus Hessus, he observes:

But these fears of yours that we Germans are becoming more barbaric than we ever were, and that because of our theology literary learning has gone downhill—these should not disturb you in the least. Often people are afraid when there is nothing to fear.... No, I notice that a significant revelation of God's Word has never happened unless he first prepared the way with the development and flowering of languages and literary learning, as though these were forerunners, John the Baptists (WAB 3,50).

Language study was an important component of the *bonae artes*, especially for students who would be going on to pursue theology. In "The Adoration of the Sacrament," Luther writes:

And to be sure, if I could make it so for you, I would ask that you not despise languages so much, but, because you are certainly able to do so, that you have your preachers and talented boys really learn Latin, Greek, and Hebrew well. Also I know for certain that anyone who is supposed to preach and explain the Scripture without help from the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew languages, and has to make do with his mother tongue exclusively, will make many a nice mistake. For, on the basis of my own experience, these languages are exceptionally useful for a clear understanding of the divine Scripture (WA 11,455).

Central to Luther's concern about the ancient languages, including Latin, was his belief that their serious study was necessary for the preservation of the Gospel. His keen interest reflects the central importance assigned in Lutheran theology to the Scriptures (as opposed to the church's traditions or the authority of councils and popes), as written in the ancient languages: "Above all, in the higher and lower schools, the principal and most common reading should be the Holy Scriptures" (WA 6,461). Luther's professional title was *Doctor in Biblia*; it is not surprising that he would advise no parent to send children to a school "where the Holy Scripture does not rule." Such schools, he feared, would

38 Preparing young men for spiritual leadership seems to have become more of a priority for Luther after 1530 (Harran, *Martin Luther*, 196; Kittelson, "Luther on Education," 33).

otherwise become “big gateways leading to hell” (WA 6,462). Even as he acknowledges the indispensability of the liberal arts as “noble gifts of God, good and useful for all sorts of things,” Luther declares that instruction in the critical issues of salvation, like sin and justification and eternal life, is the real “golden art,” which is to be found “in none of the books of the jurists or the worldly-wise, but in the Bible alone” (WA 48,78).

Far from diminishing his positive evaluation of the liberal arts, especially the study of languages, however, the Bible’s centrality in Luther’s view of education actually increased it. Unlike “enthusiasts” (*Schwärmer*) such as “the Zwickau prophets” and others who were convinced that the Holy Spirit would speak directly to them individually, as in biblical times, Lutherans held that the word of God was communicated in a mediated way to the contemporary world; the Bible was to serve as the basis for all preaching and doctrine. Not spiritual enthusiasm alone or personal charisma, therefore, but the ability to understand, teach, and preach effectively the biblical word of God, was of paramount importance in Lutheran theological education. Luther maintained that “the first concern of a theologian” should center on learning how to become, and continue to be, “a good textualist, as they call it” (WA 40.2,593). For those preparing to be Lutheran preachers, language study was essential because “when the languages are present, then it [the preaching] proceeds freshly and strongly, and the Scripture is dealt with in its entirety, and faith is renewed again and again through constant variation of words and examples” (WA 15,42). Luther warned that otherwise, based on what happened to theology during the late Middle Ages, there would be frightening consequences for its future: “I am convinced that without literary training, pure theology is unable to stand upright, just as heretofore it has collapsed entirely when literary studies toppled and fell” (WAB 3,50).

In *An die Ratsherren*, Luther vividly compares the ancient languages to scabbards in which the sword of the Spirit is sheathed and to treasure boxes in which the precious jewels of the Gospel are housed (WA 15,38). Languages are secondary, it is clear, to the Gospel, in Luther’s eyes, but that does not in any way mean that they are unnecessary. Swords that are not properly sheathed can cause serious, unintended damage. Jewels that are not protected and cared for properly can become tarnished or scuffed and are easily stolen. Scabbards are often works of art in their own right, decorated, elaborate, even beautiful.

The end product of such a Lutheran and classical education would be the *vir trilinguis*, a student trained in three languages, Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Even though the languages in which the Bible was originally written did not include Latin, serious language study would self-evidently (for Luther and his Wittenberg colleagues) continue to include Latin as an indispensable object of study.

One could go so far as to say that Latin was a biblical language for Luther. For one thing, the Vulgate was the version of the Bible that Luther and other contemporaries had grown up memorizing (and loving). Furthermore, Latin was the language in which grammar, rhetoric, and logic were taught; without these fundamental skills the biblical texts could not possibly be understood. Coursework in Greek and Hebrew was most often conducted in Latin. Finally, Latin was the language of the western church's intellectual tradition, the language in which theology had been taught for centuries. Despite their commitment to the principle of *sola scriptura*, Luther and many of the other magisterial reformers were not inclined to interpret the Bible in a theological vacuum, but rather continued to be engaged, explicitly or implicitly, in the long tradition of biblical interpretation begun by patristic authorities such as Jerome and Augustine.³⁹ Luther himself, of course, was an Augustinian friar who had read carefully *De doctrina christiana* and admired Bernard of Clairvaux.⁴⁰ His interpretation of the Bible was so commonly associated with the literal approach to biblical interpretation of Nicholas of Lyra that there was a common Latin rhyme in circulation: *Si Lyra non lyrasset, Lutherus non saltasset* ("If Nicholas of Lyra had not played the lyre, Luther would not have danced").⁴¹

Despite his severe critique of the church of his day, Luther was by no means a revolutionary. His reformation, as has been pointed out by Charles Porterfield Krauth and others, was an essentially conservative one. He did not think of himself as a reformer of the church as much as a faithful son of the same, striving not to overturn traditions (like instruction in Latin) but to return these traditions to their original purpose. Luther was unafraid to bind himself and others to all aspects of the past which God had given the church, provided they did not conflict with the claims of the Gospel.

As to how Cicero's works would fit into this curriculum at the school and university level, Luther is quite specific in his recommendations. In his Table Talks, he comments about the value of the philosophical writings, like the *Tusculan Disputations*, for the instruction of boys (WATR 1,464). He points out that

39 For Melancthon's use of patristic authorities, see Frankel, *Testimonia Patrum*. On Calvin's use of the church fathers, see Lane, *John Calvin*. That not all of the Reformation readings of the patristic sources were friendly or positive goes without saying. Luther took vociferous issue with Origen and Jerome, suggesting that there was more wisdom in Aesop's fables than in all of the latter's writings, but even this kind of negative engagement with the ecclesiastical tradition serves to indicate how powerful a hold the church fathers had upon many of these reformers.

40 *De doctrina Christiana* was printed in Strasbourg already in 1465. Luther's marginal notes survive (WA 9,11-12). See Brown, "Erasmus against Augustine and Wittenberg," 30.

41 For Luther's use of patristic sources, see Herrmann, "Luther's Absorption," 71-90.

Cicero's thoughts on death in the first book of the *Tusculan Disputations* provide excellent comfort and suggests that Christians ought to be able to offer even more comforting solace than pagans in this regard, given their hope in the resurrection (WATR 4,16). In *To the Christian Nobility*, he declares that he would like to preserve Cicero's *Rhetorica* (probably *De inventione* and *Ad Herennium*). His reason for retaining the study of Cicero in schools and universities is so that students could practice "speaking and preaching well" (WA 6,458). In his lectures on Genesis, Luther suggests that, for the purposes of inculcating moral principles, the distichs of "Cato" and Aesop's fables should be "put in front of young people," while Cicero should be given to more advanced students (*adultiores*) to learn. Luther probably has in mind here works of Cicero such as *De officiis* or other moral writings, since he goes on to explain his curricular rationale thus: "Because as far as the teaching of morals is concerned, the industry and diligence of the heathen cannot be criticized, even though they are still inferior to the law of Moses" (WA 42,373-4). "There is nothing better to be given to young people," Luther declares elsewhere, than Cicero's *De officiis*, "in order for them to learn how to lead an honorable life and pursue the sweetness and humanity of morality."⁴² In typical humanist fashion, Luther recommended to young students the "most diligent study" of Cicero not only for everything that could be "learned" there (presumably rhetorical expertise and moral lessons), but also so that students might be able to "make judgments," in order to facilitate their ability to read biblical texts and also the writings of "all the church fathers" with discerning theological acumen (WATR 2,326).

Praeceptor Germaniae

On either side of the portal of the *Protestantisches Alumneum* in Regensburg, there stand high relief sculptures of Luther and Melanchthon, welcoming, it would appear, the pupils who once were in attendance at the school there. Luther is depicted as looking upward, his gaze fixed on the heavenly domains, one supposes, while Melanchthon, with furrowed brow, stroking his chin with his left hand, just as Cicero used to do, casts his contemplative gaze downward; looming over the two of them there appears the helmeted visage of the goddess Minerva, the Roman patroness of the arts and wisdom.⁴³

It is only appropriate that the two reformers should be represented, as they often are, in such close proximity to each other, especially in front of an

⁴² WA 40.3,607. See also WA 53,490-1.

⁴³ A photograph of this doorway graces the cover of *AFW*.

institution connected with the education of the young. Their statues dominate the town square not far from the *Stadtkirche* in Wittenberg; the remains of their bodies lie in two tombs at the front of the Castle Church there. No other of Luther's numerous colleagues and collaborators played such a vital role in promoting the cause of the Reformation as Melanchthon, both as a theologian in his own right and as an extremely influential educator. There were obvious and oft-discussed differences between the two men's personalities (and theologies), which they themselves recognized; the polemical Luther once described Melanchthon's *Apology of the Augsburg Confession* as "treading lightly" (*leise treten*; WAB 5,496). Certainly Melanchthon was more willing to admit some limited role for human agency in the process of salvation than the author of *De servo arbitrio*.

It is true, too, that Luther was wont to address his concerns about pedagogy and its reform in a very general way to his noble patrons, to city councils, and to the German people in general, while Melanchthon concentrated much more specifically on reforming specific educational institutions and revising actual curricula. Luther was a professor of theology and concentrated on the theological program at the University of Wittenberg. Melanchthon, as a professor in the arts faculty who also happened to be the rector of the University, was the one who made educational reforms actually happen, ensuring that the theological work of the upper faculty was solidly supported by an updated liberal arts curriculum.⁴⁴ Gustav Adolf Benrath summarizes the cooperation of the two men at the University of Wittenberg in the following memorable way: the "reformation of the university" was due to Luther, while "the university of the Reformation" was the work of Melanchthon.⁴⁵

None of the differences between these two men, however, give us the right to overlook the fact that Luther and Melanchthon were both biblical humanists who appreciated the liberal arts and the classical tradition, who loved Cicero, and who loved each other. Most often they complemented each other's natural talents and dispositions nicely. Rather than emphasizing their differences, as has so often been done, we shall focus in this chapter on the remarkable effectiveness of this "team" as they worked together in a complementary way to establish the guiding principles of Lutheran education for the coming generations.⁴⁶ Certainly, the two of them were able to work together productively

44 Harran, *Martin Luther*, 240. On the fundamentally humanistic character of these reforms, see Scheible, "Reform von Schule und Universität," 152–172.

45 Harran, *Martin Luther*, 241.

46 For a popular study of the incremental power of teamwork, especially in pairs, see Shenk, *Powers of Two*.

as colleagues at the University of Wittenberg, standing shoulder to shoulder, as it were, despite any differences in personal dispositions and viewpoints, as long as Luther lived. It seems odd that those who rate Luther's genius so highly in comparison with Melanchthon's should be so willing to ignore Luther's own high regard for his colleague as a theologian in his own right. Is it really fair to venerate Luther's judgment in so many other regards and at the same time implicitly discount as misguided (or disingenuous) the deep respect which Luther so consistently showed to Melanchthon throughout his life?

There is no reason not to believe that Luther really did benefit greatly from his younger colleague's linguistic expertise, intellectual credibility, and diplomatic acumen. Surely not all of his frequent and high praise of Melanchthon was mere hyperbole. Luther spent a great deal of time in the company of his learned friend, not only at the university but also on trips and while sitting around the table. Of all the students whom Melanchthon taught, none was more consequential, it could be said, and more congenial a learner than Luther himself.⁴⁷

For his part, Melanchthon regarded Luther as his spiritual father and superior in many ways. In 1520 he said that he would rather die than be separated from Luther. Upon hearing of Luther's death, Melanchthon quoted Elisha's words in 2 Kings 2:12: "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horseman thereof," suggesting not only that he, like many other contemporaries, regarded Luther as a prophet of Elijah's stature, but that he saw himself as a sort of son to Luther, comparable to Elisha, ready to assume the mantle of his spiritual progenitor.

If it was Luther's unique spiritual *gravitas* that gave strong initial impetus to the increased prominence of the liberal arts in the ambitious educational agenda of the Lutheran Reformation, the depth and reach of Melanchthon's influence as a teacher is hard to overstate. His incorporation of the study of Cicero and rhetoric into the curriculum at the University of Wittenberg, his textbooks, and his own example as a teacher had an enormous influence not only on his own generation but also on those who were to follow in his footsteps long thereafter. Nor was his pedagogical influence confined only to Wittenberg or the areas immediately surrounding it. His example and ideas about teaching and learning spread across Germany and much of northern Europe. Melanchthon has often been assigned the same Latin appellation earned by the famous medieval educational reformer Rabanus Maurus centuries earlier, *praeceptor Germaniae*.

47 Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 204.

Philipp Schwarzerdt (better known as Melanchthon, the Hellenized version of his last name)⁴⁸ was born in 1497. He started his studies at the Latin school at Pforzheim, where at an early age he began to demonstrate an enviable mastery of the classics. He matriculated at the University of Heidelberg when he was not yet thirteen years old and received his master's degree from the University of Tübingen in 1514. The subjects with which he occupied himself there included Cicero (CR 4,716). His first scholarly work was a Latin preface he prepared in 1514 for Johann Reuchlin's *Clarorum virorum epistolae*. (Reuchlin was his great-uncle.) By 1516 he had produced an edition of Terence. Melanchthon quickly fell under the influence of both Erasmus and Luther, and in 1518 he was appointed professor of Greek at the newly founded University of Wittenberg where he was also to teach theology.

Melanchthon's theological work was informed by close and careful exegesis of the Scriptures in the original languages. He produced annotations on many books of the Bible, including Romans, the Gospel of John, and 1 Corinthians. Melanchthon was also a serious student of the church fathers and helped pioneer the study of the historical development of doctrine. His theological masterpiece, *Loci communes*, originally published in 1521 but revised and reissued frequently thereafter, was highly regarded by Luther and others for its clear and complete formulation of Lutheran theology. It served as a paradigm for later doctrinal compendia such as Martin Chemnitz's *Loci theologici*. The irenic Melanchthon was frequently called upon to participate in theological dialogue and debate. It was no surprise that he was chosen to take part in the ecumenical conference held in Regensburg in 1541. After Luther's death, Melanchthon emerged as the clear leader of his followers, although his authority was contested by Matthias Flacius and other so-called "Gnesio-Lutherans" who criticized what they saw as his dangerous tendency to compromise, whether it be with the papacy or other reformers like Calvin (and the "crypto-Calvinists" in the Lutheran ranks).

Like Luther, Melanchthon was a prodigious writer, but, unlike Luther, he may have been more comfortable expressing himself in Latin than in German. Thousands of Melanchthon's letters have survived, and a large number of them are in Latin. He also wrote a great deal of Latin poetry. There are nearly

48 Melanchthon justifies the common practice among humanists of translating names from vernacular languages to their Latin or Greek equivalents by appealing to the example of Cicero, who referred to his friend Titus Pomponius as Atticus, because of his literary style (CR 3,211). For a while Luther liked to call himself Eleutherius, "the free one," playing on the similarity of the sound of his name in German to the Greek adjective. Melanchthon also finds precedents for this practice in the Bible (CR 3,210).

400 of his poems included in the *Corpus reformatorum*, most of them written in Latin elegiac distichs.⁴⁹ These include scriptural paraphrases (especially of the psalms), occasional or congratulatory poetry, and epitaphs.⁵⁰ While Melanchthon himself disparaged his own poetic abilities, some of his contemporaries (e.g., Julius Caesar Scaliger) quite enjoyed his verse. Melanchthon was also a mentor to other Latin poets, like Petrus Lotichius Secundus, or his own talented son-in-law, Georg Sabinus.⁵¹

Of his own Latin prose style, Melanchthon himself observed with typical modesty: “A certain kind of discourse, that is to say, mine, is not very useful in the schools, which demand an extravagant supply and a certain flowery kind of speaking. But my discourse is thin and hungry, not at all flowery, with everything spare and juiceless.”⁵² He blamed his stylistic deficiencies on his early teachers who had failed to point him to Cicero:

How much better our teachers would have looked after our interests if they had accustomed their students to the reading of Cicero and taught us not only to excerpt words from Cicero, but also to imitate his phraseology and whole oratorical structure, that is to say, the ordering of *sententiae* and the attachment of ornaments (CR 15,503).

Instead of Cicero, his early literary models had ended up being Poliziano and Pliny, whose affected verbal refinements were completely unsuited for serious discourse and, in Melanchthon's view, frivolous:

As very young boys we happened upon Poliziano and later Pliny, whose cleverly ornate quips, in which both authors abound, proved attractive to us, and in whose writings there were some other little flowers that delighted us, for they could turn a phrase nicely, but those clever *sententiae* and pretty words are dearly loved by the youth and the inexperienced, and they please those who are playing in school, but in serious matters there is nothing more unfitting and useless than these affected refinements of speech (CR 13,503).

49 CR 10,462-672. For a comprehensive study of his Neo-Latin poetry, see Fuchs, *Melanchthon als neulateinischer Dichter*.

50 These latter include one for his own son George as well as another for Luther.

51 See Fleischer, “Melanchthon as Praeceptor,” 559–580.

52 CR 1,680.

Erasmus blamed Melanchthon's stylistic limitations on the fact that the younger humanist had neglected the full development of his extraordinary literary potential as he devoted himself to serving the immediately pressing needs of the Reformation and the University of Wittenberg: "He seemed born for the practice of extemporaneous speaking, but now he is busy with other things and has apparently cast off the pursuit of eloquence for the most part."⁵³ Johann Cochlaeus blamed Melanchthon's older colleague for ruining his style: "In this way Luther moved Philipp far away from the right manner of writing and speaking, skills with which that young man was amazingly well endowed, far beyond others of his generation, to the great glory of Germany."⁵⁴

If it is true that Melanchthon would have been even more proficient and polished an author had he not been kept so very busy his entire life as a theologian and teacher (some of his works were published without his permission and final oversight), there is still much about his own Latin prose style that not only contemporaries and followers found laudable, but that Cicero himself would have commended. Despite Erasmus's snarky remarks about Melanchthon's failure to pursue the siren call of eloquence with sufficient vigor, his Latin prose actually does fulfill the traditional criterion of *decorum* admirably; it was entirely "appropriate" given his own teacherly instincts and motivation and the needs of his students, his primary audience.

One of the main functions of Melanchthon's Latin discourse was to teach. In the first place, therefore, there must be clarity. Poets can afford to be mysterious or even obscure, and philosophers often offer up their wisdom in the form of puzzling conundrums, but teachers must be clear. Elaborate figures, long periodic sentences, irony—all can go terribly wrong in the classroom, and their unintended effect may be to confound rather than to clarify. If so, the instruction is ruined. Also, Ciceronianism as practiced dogmatically by the Italian humanists was impossibly out of place for Melanchthon's Christian pedagogical purposes. Ironically enough, its strict practice could mean actually violating the Ciceronian principle of *perspicuitas*, which might be best translated as "lack of ambiguity." As Melanchthon himself observes, if he were to follow the kind of pure "Ciceronianism" that Erasmus rejected, substituting Ciceronian words like *persuasio* for *fides* or *coelestis philosophia* for *evangelium*, he would actually be making what he had to say more obscure and distorted, instead of "illuminating difficult matters in speaking."⁵⁵ Melanchthon's Latin is invariably correct. There are no grammatical slips or solecisms or "barbarisms" other

53 Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 314, note 3.

54 Ibid., 316, note 5.

55 CR 13,497.

than those necessitated by his exegetical work with biblical texts using biblical words and expressions.

Luther himself was highly appreciative of Melanchthon's literary style and its value for debate and instruction, but he acknowledged that there were major differences between their literary styles: "Philipp is more tightly condensed than I; he gets to the polemical point and teaches; I am a windbag, more of an orator" (WATR 5,204). He also admits that he himself cannot readily achieve the kind of brevity and perspicuity that Melanchthon does.⁵⁶ Unlike Luther, Melanchthon seldom includes any more than an occasional flash of humor in his prose. In his preface to the *Commentary on the Soul* of 1540, he does offer a weak pun on the meaning of his first name, Philipp, which in Greek means "lover of horses": "These games and the tricks of sophisms give me no pleasure, and I do not wish to be a 'lover of horses' as much as a 'lover of truth.'" ⁵⁷ But such humorous moments are relatively rare.

Other contemporaries in the Lutheran camp were equally complimentary of Melanchthon's style. David Chytraeus describes Melanchthon's discourse as "a treasury of wisdom and eloquence" that surpassed anything achieved by Demosthenes and Cicero. It is simple but powerful, without being unnecessarily wordy or relying on rhetorical cosmetics (*Schminke*).⁵⁸ Laurentius Ludovicus Leobergensis, the rector of the Latin school at Görlitz, described Melanchthon's style as the apex (*Gipfel*) of Latin discourse in his age, thanks to its clarity and moral pointedness: "Whoever reads his writings diligently, will be made pious, modest, and humane."⁵⁹ Victorinus Strigel calls his style "precise, pointed, pure, beautiful, attractive, in a word, Attic." Melanchthon's pupil and close friend, Joachim Camerarius, was perhaps most incisive in his literary judgments.⁶⁰ Melanchthon's style is *castigatum et purum et sanum*. Camera-rius blames whatever lack of polish there appears to be in some of Melanchthon's writings on the haste with which they had to be produced and compares

56 *Cordatus Tagebuch*, p. 407, #1503 (Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 313). According to Sihler ("Luther and the Classics," 263), Luther cites Virgil when discussing the difficulty of preaching "correctly and efficiently": *Hoc opus, hic labor est* (*Aen.* 6.129); long sermons require less art and effort than shorter ones.

57 Transl. in Kusukawa, *Orations*, 151. Melanchthon wrote a joking poem to Georg Spalatin after he took a tumble in the mud (CR 10,549-50).

58 Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 315-316.

59 *Ibid.*, 316: "He restrains his speech, as one would dam up a brook. So, his explanatory style is clear, his narrative style ornamented and rich, his demonstration of proof is sharp and yet not effeminate nor without power."

60 *Vita Melanchth.*, 74 (Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 317).

the effect of his style not to the brilliance of the sun but rather to the shimmering glow of a star or jewel.

Regardless of his critics like Erasmus and others, some of whom even suggested that Melanchthon did not always speak Latin well or that his writings were too light and popular,⁶¹ the clearest evidence of the effectiveness of Melanchthon's own Latinity is the obvious influence it had on so many of his students. The kind of simple, clear, and relatively unadorned Latin style (most useful for the precise teaching of dogma and carrying out doctrinal discussions) which was to characterize much of the theological writing of Lutherans in the following generations may be traced directly to Melanchthon.⁶²

At the University of Wittenberg, Melanchthon did much more directly than Luther to help secure the future of classical studies. His memorable inaugural speech at the University of Wittenberg in 1518, *De corrigendis adolescentiae studiis*, proposed to restore classical learning as the foundation for the University's curriculum. It was the failure to cultivate the ancient languages and literature that had led to the church's "ruined morality" in the Middle Ages, the young professor argued.⁶³ It is only by understanding the original languages of the Scriptures that the Bible may be read directly and clearly and the church's theology be properly grounded:

Since, therefore, theology is partly Hebrew, partly Greek (for we Latins drink from their streams), other languages must be learned, so that we do not deal with theologians as though we were mute dullards. There the splendor and peculiar properties of words will be made clear, and that true and genuine literal meaning will become manifest as though laid out in the midday sun, the true and genuine sense of their literal meaning (CR 11,23).

Only when our minds have returned "to the fountains" of the ancient languages, the youthful Melanchthon assured his rapt audience, shall we "begin to understand Christ."⁶⁴

61 Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 316–318.

62 For the importance of the "demonstrative" genre for Melanchthon's teaching, see Kusukawa, *Orations*, xxx.

63 CR 11,18.

64 CR 11,23. An indication of just how much the use of Latin was taken for granted at the University of Wittenberg is Melanchthon's reference to himself and his listeners as "Latins," even though it was, of course, a second language for all of those in attendance, most of whom were surely German.

Melanchthon proved to be a popular and highly effective professor at the University of Wittenberg, where he remained until his death in 1560. Even though he had numerous opportunities to teach elsewhere, he persisted in his personal loyalty to Luther and the cause of the Reformation throughout his highly productive career. Despite all of his significant theological accomplishments, he declined to pursue a doctoral degree in theology and continued to teach Greek in the “lower faculty,” even when he could have concentrated entirely on his “more prestigious post in the theological faculty.”⁶⁵

Over the course of the following years, Melanchthon gave a number of other orations in which he addressed questions such as the order in which subjects were to be taught, the necessity of schools, and the relationship between philosophy and the Gospel. With great and consistent vigor, Melanchthon defended the traditional trivium and quadrivium and wrote enthusiastic prefaces to editions of classical authors, including Cicero. He was unstinting in his praise of the study of medicine, law, and theology. In matters pedagogical, Melanchthon was anything but a radical reformer, as is evident in his preface to the *Commentary on the Soul*: “For I believe that religion needs to be applied to teaching, in order that we do not wantonly overthrow what has been taught correctly by others.”⁶⁶ Like Luther, Melanchthon had little patience with the idea that Lutheran Christians would be better off imitating Homer’s Cyclopes, barbaric loners “who either hate or scorn” the arts and their study.⁶⁷ No doubt, in their sixteenth-century context, Melanchthon’s references to “the uneducated and the self-educated” and their “fanatical beliefs” are meant to apply to radical anti-intellectual contemporaries such as the Anabaptists and others.⁶⁸ Melanchthon’s respect for tradition may also be seen in his defense of astrology and of Aristotle, the latter the object of opprobrium, the former of derision, on the part of some of his fellow humanists and reformers.

Especially following the curricular reforms in the area of the liberal arts at the University of Wittenberg (in the 1530s), the classics, including Latin and Cicero, began to come into their own. Of the professorships, a good number were now in the classical languages.⁶⁹ One reason for this was the restoration of the disputation as a requirement for promotions for degrees (held regularly

65 Ben-Tov, *Lutheran Humanists*, 136.

66 Transl. in Kusakawa, *Orations*, 151.

67 *Ibid.*, 243.

68 *Ibid.*, 185. Karlstadt, for instance, expressed his doubts about “the use of secular medicine by any true Christian” (Nutton, “Murders and Miracles,” 51).

69 Haran, *Martin Luther*, 243.

in the upper faculty and every second Saturday in the arts faculty).⁷⁰ Expectations increased for students at the University to demonstrate their ability to speak eloquently in Latin about the knowledge they were acquiring.

Melanchthon used Cicero as a supplement to the resuscitated Aristotle, a new pedagogical approach that has been described as “Ciceronian Aristotelianism, an Aristotelianism without strict metaphysics,” making ample use of logic and rhetoric and some Stoic philosophical tendencies.⁷¹ Lewis Spitz describes this curricular reform as a “symbiosis of humanism and Reformation.”⁷²

From a *ratio studiorum* of Melanchthon’s apparently designed for students going into fields like law, we learn that included in the *literae humaniores* were the study of rhetoric, dialectics, ethics (including, specifically, Cicero’s *De officiis*), as well as mathematics and the *Institutiones* of Justinian. On Sunday the students were to read the Bible, concentrating in the evening on the Epistle to the Romans. On Monday for one or two hours they were to read Cicero’s letters. During the rest of the week they would study Terence, Livy, and Virgil, listen to lectures on ethics and politics, practice writing Latin letters and verses, and continue reading the Bible.⁷³

Melanchthon himself lectured often on Cicero at the University of Wittenberg. Hartfelder’s chronological listing of his lectures include the following:

- 1524: *De oratore*, *Pro Milone*, and *De officiis*
- 1525: *De officiis* and *Pro Sexto Roscio*
- 1528: *De oratore*
- 1529: *Pro Murena* and *Pro Marcello*
- 1529 (or 1530): *De oratore* and *Pro Archia*
- 1530: *In Pisonem*
- 1531: *Pro Caelio*, *Pro Sulla*, *Philippics* (9)
- 1532: *Pro Ligario*
- 1533: *Pro Milone*, *Pro rege Deiotaro*, *Pro Rabirio*, *Pro Sestio*, *Philippics* (1–3),
De oratore
- 1534: *De oratore* and *De officiis*

⁷⁰ Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 451.

⁷¹ Schmidt-Biggemann, “New Structures of Knowledge,” 502, as cited in Harran, *Martin Luther*, 244. See also Benrath, “Die deutsche evangelische Universität,” 71.

⁷² On the impact of the Reformation on university curricula, see Spitz, “Importance of the Reformation for the Universities,” 42–67.

⁷³ Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 469. Melanchthon’s plan of study for a prince’s education written for Johann Friedrich von Pommern featured the reading of Latin authors, including Cicero (e.g., *De officiis* and *De amicitia*), for two days of the week (Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 451).

1535: *De oratore* (book 3) and *Pro Milone*

1536: *De officiis* (book 3)

1542: *De oratore* and *Pro Murena*

1545: *De oratore*

1549: *Pro Murena*

1554: *Topica*

1555: *De officiis*⁷⁴

Melanchthon also gave lectures on the *Tusculan Disputations* and the *Epistolae familiares*, although the dates for these are uncertain. He liked Cicero's speech on behalf of Milo because of its clarity and sophisticated use of *insinuatio*.⁷⁵ Once he advertised his course on *De officiis* in seven pairs of Latin elegiac distichs, emphasizing not only the work's brevity (perhaps an attractive selling point to some students), but also its ability to "endow the untrained tongue with eloquence," so that the young men studying the work might grow up to be defenders of their country and their fellow citizens:

On Cicero's De officiis

When the holy rites of the gods provide us with leisure,
 And when boys perhaps would like to play with trifles,
 Or each one strives with winged ankles to prepare for himself
 A realm of gold surrounded by fellow banqueters,
 Please yield some part of your leisure to us,
 And I myself will bear fruit produced by the free time.
 I set before you a little tiny work by Tully,
 Which he wanted as a father to be the delight of his boy.
 It shows you what are the deathless rewards of virtue,
 And Tully himself calls you to real glory.
 The good author endows the untrained tongue with eloquence,
 That you may guard your fatherland and your fellow citizens.
 So, cheat the Genius just a little, and if you are wise,
 Learn from this brief book of Tully, please.⁷⁶

While widely acknowledged as one of the most gifted students of ancient languages in his generation, Philipp was not really a "classical philologist" in

⁷⁴ Ibid., 557–564.

⁷⁵ On the use of this device in antiquity see Bower, "ΕΦΘΔΟΣ and INSINUATIO," 224–230.

⁷⁶ Original in Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 81–82.

the modern sense of the word. Despite his prodigious intellectual abilities, he had little interest in pursuing scholarship for its own sake. His own contributions to biblical hermeneutics may have had an indirect impact on classical scholarship,⁷⁷ but it was primarily as a teacher of teachers, author of textbooks, and designer of curricula that the influence of this pious scholar spread far beyond Wittenberg and continued long after his own lifetime.⁷⁸ Melanchthon had many students who themselves went on to become influential teachers, such as Hieronymus Wolf in Augsburg (*Gymnasium bei Anna*) and Caspar Cruiger and Georg Major, who served as rectors of the *Johannisschule* in Magdeburg, a bastion of Lutheranism.⁷⁹

As noted above, Melanchthon's effect on his students was considerable, more palpable even than Luther's; it was observable in the interest so many of them took (like their teacher) in "the scholarly minutiae, the methodical care, the development of proofs and citations—these and many other formal, but also partly substantial traits."⁸⁰ As Georg Hoffman observes, using an analogy from the familiar world of electrical utilities, in Melanchthon's classroom "the high-tension of Luther's thought about faith was re-formed on the lowest, non-dangerous tension, for purposes of theological home-use, whereby a certain loss of current must be accepted." Of the unconscious and powerful nature of Melanchthon's influence as a teacher, Hoffman opines that even when students at Wittenberg were trying their best to reproduce what they learned from Luther's lectures, "involuntarily very familiar scholastic expressions from Melanchthon's lectures flowed into their pens."⁸¹ Even those who eventually turned against him were indebted their life long to their Wittenberg *praeceptor* for their rigorous education in the liberal arts and the way in which his theory and example molded their own thought, speech, and writing.

77 Pfeiffer, *Classical Scholarship*, 93–94, suggests that the "early codification of strict rules by Melanchthon and Flacius Illyricus" ended up preventing "the Lutheran exegesis of the Bible from influencing classical scholarship." The only "true scholarship" that continued was "in the Erasmian tradition." Still, Melanchthon's importance for helping to ensure for classical scholarship "a proper place for the new learning in the universities" is acknowledged by Pfeiffer, although he suggests that Melanchthon "seems also to have been responsible for a certain classroom atmosphere which became characteristic of the later German humanism in contrast to that of France and England."

78 Ben-Tov, *Lutheran Humanists*, 137.

79 What is now called "The Old Latin School" in Wittenberg, close to St. Mary's Church in the heart of the city, a large building of four stories, was begun in 1564.

80 Hoffman, 105, as quoted in Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 46.

81 As quoted in Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 46.

Melanchthon not only taught the *artes liberales*, he also wrote his own textbooks on grammar, rhetoric, and logic, as well as physics and ethics. His *Grammatica latina* was one of the best known textbooks in Germany. It was revised and reissued many times (248 editions before 1757).⁸² Many of his other textbooks were also frequently reprinted and enjoyed enviably wide circulation and influence elsewhere.⁸³ Cicero was a frequent subject for Melanchthon's pen. Hartfelder's chronological listing includes the following editions, commentaries, and studies that Melanchthon devoted to Cicero, many of these intended for use as textbooks in universities like Wittenberg:

- 1524: *M. Tullii Ciceronis de oratore libri tres a Ph. M. nova ac locupletiore quam antea locorum insignium enarratione illustrati*; Frankfurt.
- 1524: *M. Tullii Ciceronis Topica*; Wittenberg.
- 1530: *Ciceronis Officia cum scholiis M.*; Hagenau.
- 1532: *Scholia zu Ciceronis orationes in L. Catilinam*; Köln.
- 1533: *Dispositio orationis quam pro Archia poeta Cicero habuit, iam primum a Ph. M. aedita*; Hagenau.
- 1533: *M. T. Ciceronis Oratio pro M. Marcello distributis omnibus membris ac locis cum paraphrasi Ph. M.*; Wittenberg.
- 1534: *M. Tullii Ciceronis ad M. Brutum orator cum explicationibus Ph. M.*; Paris.
- 1534: *Marci Tullii Ciceronis Liber de Amicitia* (with annotations by Erasmus and Melanchthon); Köln.
- 1535: *M. Tullii Ciceronis de Oratore dialogi tres, a Ph. M. nova ac locupletiore quam antea unquam, locorum insignium enarratione illustrati. Eiusdem de perfecto Oratore ad M. Brutum Liber. Item Rhetorica ad Herrenium*; Hagenau.
- 1535: *In orationem Ciceronis pro Milone, Dispositio Ph. M. iam recens scripta*; Hagenau.
- 1537: *M. T. Ciceronis epistolae familiares. Argumentis et scholijs Ph. M. ita illustratae, ut uice prolixi commentarij esse possint*; Halle.
- 1539: *In omnes M. Tullii Ciceronis orationes, quot quidem extant doctissimorum virorum Lucubrationes, etc.*; Basel.
- 1540: *M. T. Ciceronis oratio lepidissima pro L. Murena* (with annotations by Melanchthon and Latomus); Köln.
- 1540: *In omnes M. T. Ciceronis epistolas quae familiares appellantur*; Basel.

82 Luhtala, "Pedagogical Grammars," 356.

83 On Melanchthon's rhetoric in its Renaissance context, see Meerhoff, "Significance of Melanchthon's Rhetoric," 46–62.

- 1553: *In omnes M. Tullii Ciceronis orationes*. (Includes scholia to *Pro Caecina* and *Pro Ligario*.)
- 1560: *Commentarius zu Ciceros partition. orator*. In *Val. Erythraei tabulae partitionum orator. Ciceronis etc.*; Stuttgart.
- 1567: *In selectiores M. T. Ciceronis orationes Ph. M., Iohannis Velcurionis, aliorumque doctissimorum virorum, qui in Academia Wittenbergensi olim floruerunt, enarrationes, etc.*; Leipzig. (Includes scholia to *Pro Ligario*; *Pro Rabirio*; *Pro Sestio*; *In Pisonem*; *Philippics* 1, 2, and 9; and *Pro lege Manilia*.)⁸⁴

Cicero also plays an important role in Melanchthon's published works on rhetoric. His *De rhetorica libri tres* of 1519 (republished 14 times by 1537) was mostly devoted to *inventio*. His *Institutiones rhetoricae* appeared in 1521 (republished 30 times by 1535). But by far the most popular and comprehensive of these textbooks was his *Elementa rhetorices libri duo* of 1531. It was reprinted multiple times during and after Melanchthon's lifetime.⁸⁵ Melanchthonian rhetorical theories were quite influential in England and elsewhere. The author of the first book on rhetoric in English, *The Arte or Crafte of Rhethoryke* (c. 1535), Leonard Cox, knew Erasmus and Melanchthon, and his work draws quite heavily on Melanchthon's *Institutiones rhetoricae*. Thomas Wilson's popular *Arte of Rhetorique* was also indebted to Melanchthon.⁸⁶

Melanchthon's were certainly not the first textbooks of the early modern period devoted to teaching rhetoric. Already in the early quattrocento, the Italian humanist Gasparino da Barizza had published his popular *Tractatus de compositione*. (His *Liber epistolarum* was the first book to be printed in France.) Melanchthon may have been aware of Gasparino, but the work that was likely more directly influential on him was Rudolph Agricola's *De inventione dialectica*. Agricola was a close friend of Reuchlin, and we know that Melanchthon had a copy of his book already in 1516. Even more formative, no doubt, for Melanchthon's rhetorical theory were the influential stylistic principles of Erasmus. Long after Erasmus and Luther were both dead, Melanchthon praised the former's rhetorical achievements in an oration, commending him for "finding the right point to make ... and for his copious eloquence, figures of speech, charm and grace" (CR 12,265-6).

84 Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 583ff.

85 There is a good overview of Melanchthon's rhetorical contributions in Mack, *History of Renaissance Rhetoric*, 106–122. See also Knape, *Philipp Melanchthons Rhetorik*.

86 Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 248.

As they were for Gasparino and other humanist rhetoricians, the most important ancient stylistic models for Melanchthon's rhetorical theory were Cicero and Quintilian, Latin exemplars even more useful, he suggests, for the instruction of young people than ancient Greek authorities (CR 2,543). While himself no mindless Ciceronian, Melanchthon defends the ancient Roman rhetor against Poliziano's attacks, blames the flaws in the style of the now notorious Ciceronians not on their reliance on Cicero but on their failure to imitate him properly and fully, and declares that he would prefer the shadowy outline of Cicero's face to the clearly expressed features of Poliziano or Aulus Gellius. Imitation is important for Melanchthon, and Cicero is the best model, but it makes little sense, from a truly Ciceronian perspective, to imitate only Cicero since the famous Roman orator was perfectly willing himself to take his own stylistic cues from others (CR 13,493).

Style is a practical matter for Melanchthon: "Sweetness of speech is a greater advantage to a person than any other human accomplishment." It is not simply to be practiced for the sake of decoration. He recommends Cicero's letters for those seeking to pursue the traditional "middle" style and his orations for the "grand." Not only the *elocutio* of Cicero himself, but that of Terence, Caesar, and Livy, according to Melanchthon, is worthy of imitation. Even Plautus is recommended for his "light touches" (*facetiae*). Among later authors, however, only Quintilian deserves consideration. Pliny and Tacitus are to be avoided, as are Apuleius and Sidonius Apollinaris.⁸⁷ Imitation itself should be done judiciously, according to Melanchthon, because there is nothing more "deformed or monstrous" than the mindless "stitching together" of others' words (CR 16,724). *Imitatio specialis* was to be dedicated to the compositional strategies of Cicero alone.⁸⁸

87 Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 344–345.

88 In his 1523 oration in praise of eloquence, Melanchthon cites Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* as he explains the advantages of its study and the dangers of rhetorical ignorance: "I have expounded the reasons which attract me to the study of the arts of speaking, without doubt because both a fixed method of speaking needs to be observed, and some power of judgement is conveyed to the student by the habit of these arts. If anyone thinks that this has nothing to do with him, he is without doubt very far removed from any feeling of humanity. Good men, on the other hand, will rush to these studies, with sails and oars, as they say [Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 3.2.25], as soon as they have contemplated the strength of the advantages which we gain from speech, and have realized both that a fixed method of speaking is needed and that by these arts the mind is rendered more cultivated. In truth there are not too few, in particular in these times, who hinder the course of good men; these deny that the knowledge of the arts of speaking contributes to the study of theological writings, and this error—spread widely as if by some contagion—has seized many who spurn the humanities in order not to appear to be theologizing improperly.... Unless

The rhetorical rules Melanchthon sets forth in his textbooks are often illustrated by examples taken from Cicero (e.g., *Pro Archia*). These include: the arrangement of the parts of a speech, the proper ordering of sentences, and the development of periodic sentences adorned with appropriate verbal ornaments. Still, Melanchthon is no “perfectionist” in this regard. He recognizes that Latin is no longer for his students a living language as it was for Cicero; it would be folly to pretend that they could reconstruct the original “sound” of Ciceronian Latin (CR 13,500).⁸⁹ Even when Melanchthon parts company with Cicero, the Roman orator’s teachings and example are always on his mind. Melanchthon divides *elocutio* into three parts (*sermo grammaticus*, *figurae*, and *amplificationes*) instead of the traditional four, but he argues that they are still essentially the same as Cicero’s.⁹⁰

The relationship between rhetoric and dialectic is so close in Melanchthon’s view that it is often difficult to make a distinction, especially in the areas of *inventio* and *dispositio*, where the discovery and ordering of what one will say are to be considered (CR 11,103). Rhetorical figures and the commonplaces of dialectical argument often overlap. In his introduction to Cicero’s *De officiis* Melanchthon makes the same point: “Finally, what solid learning depends on is the ability to judge ideas and moral behavior correctly. Then whatever you have apprehended intellectually can be clearly and appropriately expounded and delivered” (CR 16,627).⁹¹

How closely connected, and yet differentiated, rhetoric and dialectic are in Melanchthon’s mind may be seen in this discussion of the difference between rhetoric and dialectic from his *Erotemata dialectices*:

Even if there are some who look for other differences, nonetheless this is the obvious and true differentiation: the two arts are close to each other, but dialectic deals with all subjects and sets forth its conclusions in appropriate words in an unadorned fashion and does not deck out a thought by using many words or by applying the illumination of figures. Rhetoric, on the other hand, applies a decorative treatment to subjects which can be

these writings are studied, we shall have a posterity that is in no way more sane than past centuries, when the ignorance of writings had overthrown all human and divine matters” (CR 11,50-66; transl. in Kuskawa, *Orations*, 73-74).

89 Melanchthon was perfectly aware that while he and other educators might set up Cicero’s oratorical achievements as models for their students, the high level of his splendid eloquence was not easily attainable by most of them (CR 12,216).

90 Hartfelder, *Praeceptor Germaniae*, 225-226.

91 Ibid., 214. “Melanchthon insists on the two subjects’ mutual need and assistance” (Mack, *History of Renaissance Rhetoric*, 108). “Without the direction provided by rhetoric, dialectic becomes inward-looking and over-technical.”

illustrated with an abundance of speech and splendor and decked out in various ways. For not all subjects are susceptible to this kind of polishing, just as a geometer will be inept and ridiculous if he tries to add ornaments and oratorical elements to his demonstrations the way a public speaker does. And in many cases when people have to be taught, an appropriate dialectic approach is preferable to ambitious adornment. But in moral matters, those illuminations of words and figures by which the listener can be aroused and have his attention sustained for a long time in consideration of one thought or can even be terrified and motivated by thundering words, take pride of place.⁹²

Even in an age in which the printed word had assumed a great deal of importance, the oral medium of preaching for the Reformation, the *vox viva evangelii*, continued to be central, and Melanchthon played an important role in the development of Lutheran preaching, although as a layman he himself rarely set foot in a pulpit. Cicero's influence on future Lutheran preachers, even though their sermons were not preached in Latin, was considerable, thanks in no small part to Melanchthon. In his curriculum design for future theologians of 1530, *Ratio discendae theologiae*, he insists upon the study of Cicero and other ancient Greek and Latin authors.⁹³ For his rhetorical theory, Melanchthon follows classical models, as we have seen, but with significant adaptations, recasting them in a way that would be compatible with the greatest needs of the Lutheran teacher and preacher. Of the three classical *genera*, for instance, he virtually eliminated the *genus iudiciale*, and he added another category, the *genus didaskalikon*, in which he himself, as a lifelong teacher, was very well versed indeed.⁹⁴ The new category was used to describe not only instruction in the classroom but also the teaching of pure doctrine from the pulpit.⁹⁵

92 CR 13,515. Melanchthon's textbooks on dialectic include: *Compendiaria dialectices ratio* (Leipzig, 1520); *Dialectices libri quatuor* (Hagenau, 1528); and *Erotemata dialectices* (Wittenberg, 1547).

93 A thorough study of the Bible is the most important component of a Lutheran theologian's education, but it is not sufficient, according to Melanchthon: "It will be impossible for anyone to make right judgments about the nature of language and figures without reading the writings of the most eloquent men." Of these, Cicero's name is listed first among the Latin authors, followed by Livy, Virgil, Terence, Ovid, and Quintilian. Melanchthon also recommends that Greek authors (Homer, Herodotus, Demosthenes, and Lucian) be read (CR 2,460).

94 CR 13,421.

95 Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 65.

For sermonizing, there was also what Melanchthon called the *genus epitrepticum*, for exhorting listeners to believe, and the *genus paraeneticum*, for the encouragement of good works.⁹⁶ Actual preaching styles were no doubt highly idiosyncratic, reflecting specific contexts and circumstances, and not, therefore, entirely dependent upon theoretical considerations.⁹⁷ Still, it is safe to say that Ciceronian principles of oratory as reshaped by Melanchthon must have influenced the construction of many a Lutheran sermon, not only in his own lifetime but long thereafter, far more than medieval (or biblical) models.⁹⁸

Melanchthon wrote works specifically on preaching, *De officiis concionatoris* (1529) and *De modo et arte concionandi* (1540), which were also influential not only directly on disciples like David Chytraeus and Lucas Bacmeister the Elder but also indirectly on later Protestant preaching in general.⁹⁹ As Shuger observes, both in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries “most Protestant rhetorics are of Lutheran origin,” including *Pastor, sive pastoris optimus vivendi agendique modus* by Niels Hemmingsen, a Danish theologian who studied with Melanchthon at the University of Wittenberg.¹⁰⁰ Johannes Hepinus (Hoeck) and Veit Dietrich, the latter a good friend of Luther and a frequent table companion of his, wrote shorter Latin treatises on preaching. The *Pastorale* of Erasmus Sarcer, a Wittenberg alumnus who helped to introduce the Reformation to Nassau, is the first treatise on preaching written by a reformer in German.¹⁰¹ William Perkins, author of *Art of Prophesying* (first produced in

96 Haemig and Kolb, “Preaching in Lutheran Pulpits,” 136.

97 For perspectives on the early modern sermon not only as a literary text but a living performance that was inextricably involved with all aspects of public life, see Armstrong, “Sermons in Performance,” and other essays collected in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*.

98 Melanchthon divided the ideal sermon, like an oration, into familiar components: “exordium, narration, proposition, division into parts, confirmation, refutation, and peroration” (Balserak, “Sermons,” 1180). See Moss, *Renaissance Truth*, 186, for a description of a collection of sermon plans, published in Wittenberg in 1537, analyzing good preaching in traditional classical rhetorical terms. Burnett, “How to Preach a Protestant Sermon,” 109–119, observes how influential the model of the classical oration endorsed by Melanchthon was for Lutheran preaching throughout the sixteenth century.

99 The Latin word *contio* (*concio*), as opposed to *sermo*, emphasizes the public character and context of preaching. On Melanchthon’s homiletical theories in general, see Schnell, *Homiletische Theorie Philipp Melanchthons*.

100 Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 69. The *De formandis concionibus sacris* by Andreas Hyperius, of Flemish origins, was more influenced by Martin Bucer than the Wittenberg Lutherans.

101 See Dyck, “Erasmus Sarcer’s *Pastorale*,” 221–237.

Latin in 1592 and then in English in 1607), acknowledges his debt to Erasmus, Hemmingsen, Flacius, and Hyperius.¹⁰²

Melanchthon served as advisor on curricular reforms at a number of other universities, including Tübingen, Leipzig, and Heidelberg. He was also instrumental, directly or indirectly, in efforts to establish Latin schools in cities all over Germany. The private school that Melanchthon held in his own home in Wittenberg probably served as a model of sorts.¹⁰³ One of the first such schools he was involved in establishing was in Nürnberg. His former student and close friend, Camerarius, served as its rector.¹⁰⁴ That such schools were not always easy to establish we may gather from Melanchthon's preface to the *Commentary on the Soul*, in which he encourages a senator of Nürnberg, Hieronymus Baumgartnerus, who had helped set up the school of Saint Aegidius there, not to "be deterred ... from defending our Sparta to the utmost of our ability" by those who mock schools and schooling.¹⁰⁵ Before his death in 1560, some 50 cities would end up appealing to Melanchthon for help in establishing schools of this sort.¹⁰⁶ It is estimated that by the end of the sixteenth century there were roughly 300 such schools, new or reconstituted, almost all of which followed "the Evangelicals' understanding of the liberal arts."¹⁰⁷

One of Melanchthon's most significant pedagogical achievements was a manual that he put together and published in 1528 for visitations of parishes in electoral Saxony. (Luther wrote a preface for the work and made revisions, but Melanchthon did most of the writing.) The manual included directions on how to teach Latin grammar, beginning with etymology, continuing with

102 Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 64. Michael Reu observes that Hyperius's treatment of homiletics puts the emphasis on "*inventio*, that is, on the *quid*, or subject-matter." To this are subordinated "all questions concerning the *quomodo*, or form, thus permitting the peculiar content of the sermon to exhibit its divine power and achieve its definite purpose" (*Homiletics*, 30).

103 It was for the benefit of these and other students at this early educational stage of development that Melanchthon's textbooks on Latin and Greek grammar were intended.

104 There is a *Melanchthon-Gymnasium* there today, whose students are still required to take six years of Latin and three years of Greek.

105 Transl. in Kusakawa, *Orations*, 144. Unlike many of Melanchthon's fellow compatriots, who often disparaged his kind of formal education and sought instead "by their own shrewdness" to "find ways for accumulating riches or increasing their power," the Spartans were well known in ancient Greece for the unstinting care they took collectively in the education of their city-state's young.

106 Manschreck, *Quiet Reformer*, 143; Harran, *Martin Luther*, 187.

107 Green, "Bible in Humanist Education," 116, as cited in Korcock, *Lutheran Education*, 69.

syntax, and concluding with prosody.¹⁰⁸ Once students had begun to build their vocabulary and learned to read basic Latin (e.g., “Cato’s” *Distichs*), they would proceed at the next level to memorize and construe easy Latin passages from works such as Aesop’s *Fables*, the *Colloquies* of Erasmus, and the plays of Terence and Plautus. From there pupils would go on to read Virgil, Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, and Cicero’s *De officiis* and letters.¹⁰⁹ Eventually they were required to write a letter or poem in Latin each week and to speak Latin. Schoolmasters themselves were supposed to speak only Latin in the classroom. Memorization played an important role, as did repetition and recitation, but Melanchthon recognized the importance of alleviating potential boredom by introducing variety. The tedious study of grammar was to be interrupted occasionally by singing. Teachers were instructed not to attempt to do too much or to go too fast. Students should not learn the fundamentals of language mindlessly, without understanding the reason for their intellectual exertions, but rather appreciate language study’s value in the broader context of the liberal arts.¹¹⁰

One of the most influential (and controversial) studies of early Lutheran education, that of Gerald Strauss, assumes that it was primarily a vehicle to serve the purposes of “indoctrination” in religious beliefs. He concludes of “Luther’s house of learning” that “if it was its central purpose to make people—all people—think, feel, and act as Christians, to imbue them with a Christian mindset, motivational drive, and way of life, it failed.”¹¹¹ There is some evidence to support Strauss’s pessimistic point of view. Stark differences existed between the German schools located most often in smaller towns and the

108 See LW 40,316–7.

109 WA 26,239: *Vom dritten hauffen ... Abents: Officia Ciceronis odder Epistolas Ciceronis familiares.*

110 The strong emphasis on the liberal arts does not mean that Melanchthon was less interested in the instruction of Christian doctrine or the formation of Christian character. The church and the school were in a complementary relationship, not in competition with each other. In the first stage of the curriculum students learned the Lord’s Prayer, the Creed, and prayers in Latin. They would memorize selected Psalms and study the Gospel of Matthew from a grammatical perspective, and the more advanced might go on to study Paul’s letters to Timothy or the Old Testament book of Proverbs, but not more theological works such as the Gospel of John, whose study was to be saved for more advanced levels of academic achievement (Harran, *Martin Luther*, 191).

111 Strauss, *Luther’s House of Learning*, 307. Harran notes that if “the German schools represent the low end of the reformers’ educational expectations as indicated in the *Schulordnungen* from the latter parts of the sixteenth century, the Latin schools in towns and cities represent the high end” (*Martin Luther*, 264). For a criticism of Strauss, see the review of Spitz in *American Historical Review*, 143. For another assessment, see Karant-Nunn, “Alas, a Lack,” 788–798.

Latin schools so popular in the cities. The academic expectations for the students in the former were lower, their achievements slighter, and the faculty less well paid than was the case at the Latin schools. As Strauss observes:

Discrepancies between Latin and vernacular teachers were enormous, a state of affairs often deplored by visitors but left unchanged throughout the century. Visitors in Coburg in the 1570s, for example, noted that "German teachers have a small income here, no more than about 10 gulden per year each," whereas a Latin school rector, they reported in 1578, had 61 gulden with free housing.¹¹²

There were parishes where the *custos* (sexton) who was assigned to help the pastor in a number of important tasks, including education, was completely unqualified or uninterested in teaching. And there were often not enough of these *custodes* to go around. In 1533 there were 738 school locations in Thuringia, but only 250 sextons.¹¹³ In one instance, it is clear that the sexton himself could not read and write. Some, or even much, of the instruction that happened in these German schools must have been oral. Needless to say, the study of Cicero would not have been an important consideration in a parish like Zinna, where some peasants were unwilling to pray the Lord's Prayer (a relatively brief piece, just over 50 words in Luther's German) because it was too long.¹¹⁴

Whether the discrepancy between the education offered to the rich and poor, upper and lower classes, was more pronounced in the case of Lutheran education in the sixteenth century than it was in other schools in other parts of Europe at other times is hard to say. Such wide variations in quality have continued to characterize public education to the present day. Whether it is anachronistic to impose our own expectations for universal education onto the sixteenth century is another consideration. Strauss's findings rely on visitation reports and the specific problems which are detailed there (ignorance, apathy, etc.), but these may not provide us with a truly comprehensive view. The visitation reports also have a rhetorical function. Those responsible for preparing these often dismal reports may themselves have been guilty of conscious or unconscious exaggeration. After all, it is only by emphasizing the gravity of a problem that one may reasonably hope to begin to propose solutions that will be taken seriously. The mere fact that in the sixteenth and later centuries Luther's chorales, Bible translation, and *Small Catechism* remained so popular (not only in terms of how often reprinted, but also in terms of the extent to

¹¹² Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 185.

¹¹³ Harran, *Martin Luther*, 258.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 254.

which their words were memorized) suggests that even among the relatively unschooled or illiterate, the basic doctrines of Lutheranism were well known by a very large number of people indeed.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, the fact that such educational problems and deficiencies were being reported at all is a strong indication of the interest on the part of the reformers in correcting them, not ignoring, excusing, or perpetuating them. The very evidence that Strauss and others finds so damning, in other words, may also be used to argue that active steps were being taken to identify educational deficiencies as they occurred and to find specific solutions to problems that educators of our own day have found notoriously difficult to correct in a short amount of time.

Whether or not one agrees with Strauss's conclusions about the failure of Luther's educational strategies as a medium for reshaping the faith of the common people, at the very least we can say that the Latin schools served as efficacious vehicles for improving the quality of Latinity in particular and the rhetorical abilities in general of those young people who were to become leaders in church and society for many generations to come. To be sure, the role that classical education may have had to play in promoting the success of the elites is a point that is of less interest to Strauss than the effects Lutheran education had on a broader spectrum of society, but it is the one to be made here.

While the success of these Latin schools in inculcating Lutheran doctrine may not be the issue that concerns us most here, a more relevant question does arise as to whether all of this emphasis on the study of the ancient languages was worth it. Preserved Smith observes of the pedagogy of the sixteenth century that it was "thorough," but then he asks, somewhat dismissively: what did it "all amount to in the end, but Latin and Greek?"¹¹⁶ After detailing all of the preliminary work that pupils in Latin schools were required to do in Latin and Greek, the catechism, and music, Strauss notes that "also, at long last, arithmetic" was "finally" studied.¹¹⁷ Strauss's "finally" and "at long last" suggest a degree of surprise on his part that priority should be given to the study of the classical languages and that an important subject like arithmetic should on that account have to be reserved for a later stage of the curriculum.¹¹⁸

115 On this point, in general, see Brown, *Singing the Gospel*.

116 Spitz, *Sturm*, 353.

117 "Finally, if there was fifth grade (not all Latin schools had one) it took up the *Aeneid*, Melancthon's *Dialectics* and Greek grammar, Hesiod, the *Iliad*, and practice in translating from one classical language to another; also, at long last, arithmetic" (Strauss, *Luther's House of Learning*, 188–189).

118 Actually, it would have been surprising if arithmetic had come earlier, since it was part of the quadrivium, traditionally, not the trivium. Neither ancient Romans nor early modern humanists would have expected the study of numbers to take any sort of priority in

The strong agreement among Luther and the other Wittenberg reformers on the importance of a curriculum founded in the classics ensured that boys in Lutheran Latin schools far removed from each other geographically would have a similar educational experience. There was a remarkable “drive for uniformity,” as Strauss has observed, among these schools in the early modern period. There was also a generally conservative tendency among Lutheran educators, an aversion to innovation for its own sake, which meant that curricula remained relatively stable for decades, even centuries, after Melanchthon’s death. So, even though there were some variations from place to place, and even though some modifications were made over time, the study of Latin and Cicero continued, with few exceptions, to be unchallenged right up into the twentieth century.

So, what did all of this emphasis on the classics “amount to in the end?” While it would be unwise to argue that there must be a direct relationship between the curricula of schools and the actual educational results their students achieve, many of the schools in Germany and elsewhere that followed the model established by Melanchthon would have to be judged spectacularly effective if measured on the basis of the successes of their alumni. Over the next centuries these schools produced countless well-educated theologians and academics (including classical philologists) as well as highly competent professionals in other fields such as law, medicine, and government administration.¹¹⁹

instruction over the study of words. In the early modern period, it was words, after all, not numbers, which would have been of the greatest use, practically speaking, for the daily work of elites in this prescientific age.

- 119 Few schools were more influential than those established at the behest of Duke Moritz (of Albertine Saxony), designed to educate the elite of the elites, the so-called *Fürstenschulen*. One was at Meissen (*Sankt Afra*; founded in 1543) and could accommodate 70 boys, with the other at *Schulpforta* (*Pforta*) near Naumburg, founded in the same year, with room for 100 boys. Approximately one third of them were chosen from the ranks of the nobility. A third school was established in Grimma in 1550 in a vacant Augustinian monastery (the humanist poet Adam Siber was the first rector, and the Lutheran hymn-writer, Paul Gerhardt, was an alumnus). Boys who were admitted would be between 11 and 15 and would already be proficient in Latin after finishing the initial three levels of a Latin school prior to admission. Students at the *Fürstenschulen* arose at 5 AM and pursued the study of Latin and Greek, in addition to poetry, dialectic, rhetoric, and astronomy. Sometimes Hebrew was taught on Saturday (Harran, *Martin Luther*, 265).

“Cicero Refused to Die”

In this chapter we shall explore the question of Cicero's continuing importance in schools and universities in the centuries following the Reformation to the present, and also try to tease out, selectively, other aspects of his possible influence as well. Despite numerous educational reforms and adjustments to Latin curricula and pedagogies over time, Cicero's works continued to be parsed, translated, and discussed in schools in Europe and the Americas for hundreds of years. The uninterrupted continuation of classical Latin and Cicero in the classroom bears remarkable witness not only to the staying power of the convictions of Renaissance humanists and Protestant reformers but also to the more or less anonymous industry of tens of thousands of teachers who implemented these visions thereafter.

John Rolfe acknowledges that whatever influence Cicero had in the years following the initial Reformation must have been “important” but reckons that it can only have been “indirect,” because it was “in the schools.”¹ Questions having to do with influence may indeed be especially difficult to address in the case of an author whose ideas and writings were taught in schools and universities as often as Cicero's and for so long. But we shall not be as concerned as others with drawing distinctions between “direct” and “indirect” influence. The influence exerted by an author upon readers is often mediated in one way or another, even in the author's own lifetime. Indeed, one wonders why encounters with an ancient author as a student in an academic setting should be considered any less “direct” a source of influence than any other sort of influence (such as looking up a passage in a book when one is middle-aged).

It certainly is hard to trace or measure with any degree of precision how much and what sort of an influence a popular curriculum author like Cicero might have had on the subsequent literary style, cultural values, and political ideology of those who studied his works while in school. Even if broadly telling, sweeping generalizations about education, especially when presented in the form of demographic statistics, seldom illuminate the particularity of specific experiences. Likewise, curricular guides, educational regulations, and syllabi may tell us more about good pedagogical intentions than they do about actual results. One suspects, with Grafton and Jardine, that the “elevated

1 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 148. The title for this chapter was chosen for a 2013 collection of essays on Cicero's influence edited by Nancy van Deusen.

claims of all promoters of new educational programmes become more pedestrian when translated into classroom practice.”² Syllabi, even when published, are not always accurate indicators of what exactly is being taught and learned in the classroom. The idealistic hopes of even the most ambitious of teachers are often dashed on the stony realities of what it is possible to achieve with any given group of students in any given semester. And it should not simply be assumed that everyone who read Cicero in school was positively influenced by him (although aversion to Cicero is itself a strong indication of how much influence he continued to have).

But even if the nature and extent of Cicero’s influence within and beyond the classroom may be challenging to establish, influence there doubtless was, however hard it may be to determine its exact route. Wherever there are explicit references to Cicero, for one thing, we may be sure that there was some sort of influence, direct or indirect, and there are plenty of examples of this sort to consider. In the case of Cicero, this influence amounts to much more than a strong memory here or there that somehow managed to stay alive. Because he was studied for his prose style, Cicero had an enormous impact on the language of post-Reformation authors, not only in Latin but also in the vernacular languages. Furthermore, some of Cicero’s ideas (especially in the areas of politics and morality) were very influential, not only *in abstracto*, but also as applied directly to momentous modern circumstances like the American or French Revolutions. We shall touch on a few aspects of this complicated subject, and our focus will eventually be brought to bear on one of the most famous of Latin teachers of any age, Johann Sebastian Bach, a subject with Lutheran implications.

Since Cicero’s influence was not confined to Europe but spread quickly to the Americas, beginning with the educational activity of Catholic friars in Mexico and elsewhere in Latin America, we shall conclude the chapter with a discussion of the importance of Cicero and the study of Latin in the United States. Here we shall touch briefly on such divergent topics as Cicero’s influence on the “Founding Fathers,” presidential oratory, and the history of classical scholarship in America, and draw attention to the role of Latin and Cicero in Lutheran theological education.

Johann Sturm and the *Ratio Studiorum*

Melanchthon was the grand designer of the new Lutheran educational program, but it was lesser known colleagues and contemporaries of his who did

2 Grafton and Jardine, *From Humanism to the Humanities*, 25.

much to make it a reality outside of Wittenberg. Johann Bugenhagen, for example, played a key role in organizing elementary education in northern German territories such as Braunschweig and Schleswig-Holstein, including major cities such as Hamburg, Lübeck, and Wolfenbüttel. The "second apostle of the north," as Bugenhagen was called (second only to Saint Ansgar), also played an instrumental role in introducing Lutheranism to Denmark/Norway. His "Braunschweig Orders" of 1528 are clearly dependent on the "Saxon Visitation Articles." Of the liberal arts, Bugenhagen emphasized grammar in particular. Teachers were advised to make sure that the schoolboys "learn Latin and know how to read it, write it, understand about the author, speak Latin, and always write Latin verses and essays," avoiding any admixture of Latin and German and steering clear of what Bugenhagen called "kitchen Latin."³ As opposed to Karlstadt's narrow biblicism and the interest on the part of some parents in strictly vocational training, Bugenhagen's vision was of "a confessionalized liberal arts program."⁴ He was instrumental in reforming the University of Greifswald in his native Pomerania along the lines of the University of Wittenberg.

Even more devoted to the teaching of Cicero than Bugenhagen was Johann Sturm, born in 1507 near Aachen. He attended the College of St. Jerome in Liège under the supervision of the Brothers of the Common Life, following a curriculum that would have resembled very much the one Erasmus studied a couple of generations earlier, a blend of classical and Christian texts.⁵ Sturm went on to attend the University of Louvain as a student in the "College of Three Languages."⁶ From 1531–34 he taught at the *Collège de France*. In 1538 he was appointed to fill the position of rector of a new academy in Strasbourg, consolidated from three schools already in operation there. It was a probationary appointment that ended up lasting for over 40 years.

Inspired by the educational vision of Luther and Melanchthon (Sturm wrote a preface for one of the latter's books on dialectic and was a close friend of his protégé, Joachim Camerarius), Sturm was an ardent supporter of the study of Latin, declaring it a public disaster that children began first to learn to speak their mother tongue rather than Latin. At his academy in Strasbourg, it was of the utmost importance that students should learn to speak, read, and write Latin, beginning at age six or seven and continuing into their early twenties. The challenge of learning Latin via total immersion seems to have been

3 Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 78.

4 Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 47. For more details, see Hendel's doctoral dissertation, "Johannes Bugenhagen's Educational Contributions." For the "Braunschweig Orders," see Sehling, *Braunschweig Kirchenordnungen*, 3–80.

5 The College of St. Jerome eventually became a Jesuit school.

6 Spitz, *Sturm*, 20. For more biographical background see Mathieu, *Johannes Sturm*.

accepted with a certain amount of enthusiasm by pupils and parents alike. Latin was supposed to be continued to be spoken by the boys even when they were on holiday; some parents went so far as to write letters in Latin to their children while at school, in order to give them additional practice.⁷ Sturm turned the entire school experience in Strasbourg into a “giant language laboratory” in which students could absorb Latin in the most lively and natural way possible.⁸

Already by the end of their first year the young boys at Sturm’s school were expected to be able to read shorter letters of Cicero. The first seven levels of instruction were devoted to “teaching clear Latin speech,” with the remaining two spent “developing the ornate style.”⁹ The three lowest levels were completely devoted to Latin, with Cicero as “the hands-on favorite” and “the staple of instruction” as one of those authors “in whom one cannot err.”¹⁰ By the end of that time, in addition to Cicero’s letters, students would have read *De amicitia* and *De senectute*, “those two great books by Cicero ... both elegant and pious and easy to understand,”¹¹ along with poetry of Catullus, Horace, and Tibullus, as well as Virgil’s *Eclogues* and *Aeneid*. In later years students were given passages from Cicero’s works to imitate, including “periodic sentences which have the utmost ornamentation.”¹²

Even when students at Sturm’s school would begin the study of Greek, they were to continue reading Cicero: *De officiis* and a Ciceronian oration such as *Pro lege Manilia* or *Pro Ligario*. For rules governing the use of ornament, students would read the third book of Cicero’s *De oratore* and *Orator* as well as Hermogenes. In the following year, Demosthenes would alternate with Cicero, as would Homer with Virgil. Rules for rhetoric continued to be studied using *Ad Herennium* and Cicero’s *De partitione oratoria*. In the second highest grade, students were supposed to go “to Cicero’s *Orator* for a brief exposition of what is appropriate, what subject matter an orator ought to include, and how an oration is perfected.”¹³

Cicero was to be studied not only for his oratorical abilities but as a philosopher in his own right: “The reputation which Plato achieved among Greek

7 Leonhardt, *Latin*, 222.

8 See Spitz, *Sturm*, 55. All translations from Sturm’s works here and in the following discussion are drawn from this volume.

9 Ibid., 86.

10 Ibid., 48.

11 Ibid., 90.

12 Ibid., 93.

13 Ibid., 103.

philosophers is that which Cicero has won among Latin orators, namely as the wisest orator, most eloquent philosopher, clearest light of all orators, and a unique example for all learned men."¹⁴ For lawyers, who should be educated "knowledgeable men," Sturm insisted on a firm foundation in the liberal arts, including philosophy and dialectic. Only then would it be possible for them to achieve wisdom, as "Cicero, or Crassus, in Cicero's *De Oratore* in the first conversation, promises."¹⁵ Otherwise they will be mere "practitioners" of the law, seeking only "to acquire wealth and resources rather than cultivate wisdom and perfect teaching."

In his *De amissa dicendi ratione* Sturm uses Cicero's *Pro Quinctio* to illustrate his ideas on how best to learn "the lost art of speaking." In his treatise on how to educate the Werter brothers, young noblemen, he advises them to devote themselves "at first chiefly to the orations of Cicero and Demosthenes, then to Cicero's philosophical and historical books." But he also suggests that the letters of Cicero, "should immediately from the very beginning be taken in hand."¹⁶ The speech *Pro Cluentio* is especially useful for instruction since it contains "varieties of narration." It can be explained by the teacher in such a way that even "children can understand it and observe the passages worthy of imitating when they know the rhetoricians."¹⁷ In a letter to his colleague Valentin Erythraeus, Sturm explains how he used Cicero's *Pro Milone* in class to illustrate the construction of a line of argumentation. His students were able to see "how greatly Cicero differs from other writers and how great is the distinction between the forensic type of speaking and that of philosophers and historians."¹⁸

Above all, it is in the area of ornament that Cicero was regarded as most useful by Sturm.¹⁹ Of course, in order for discourse to appear graceful and effective, excessive or superfluous adornment must be carefully avoided. The best ornaments of speech need to seem not only "ornate but also necessary."²⁰

Cicero is not the only possible model, Sturm concedes, but if it is the purpose of this kind of education "to polish the voice and speech of a nobleman," it would be very difficult to replace the study of Cicero, since "no one else has expressed such a variety of speaking with supreme elegance and adornment

14 Ibid., 108–109.

15 Ibid., 318.

16 Ibid., 155.

17 Ibid., 281.

18 Ibid., 331.

19 Ibid., 330.

20 Ibid., 97.

of speech as this writer.”²¹ While other classical authors might be used to supplement Cicero, Sturm is adamant that neither medieval Latin nor any other substandard form of the language should be read at all. In a letter addressed to the English pedagogue, Roger Ascham, on teaching the English nobility, he declares passionately that no student should read Cato or Aquinas or any other author from “the barbarous crowd of grammarians, dialecticians, medical doctors, theologians and philosophers to whom shabby usage has been preferable to pure, and crabbed usage to practical.” He goes on to ask rhetorically:

What can the state of affairs of learning and of religion be in such ugliness of speech, language, and rhetoric! Who among them will not be despised if one should perceive the sound of their speech, the deformity of their words, the baseness of their sentences, the ineptitude of their opinions, the obstinacy of their minds, their unworthy usage and their foreign ways? They have imposed barbarity on the noble disposition. They have corrupted the arts and disciplines. They have sullied histories, religion, and ceremonies not only with their rotted kind of speech but also with their ignorant opinions.²²

While quite insistent on the mastery of Latin as the key to all further learning, Sturm was not entirely unrealistic in his expectations of students. He believed in gradual improvement and stressed the importance of variety for the best pedagogical results. His pupils imitated written models, memorized, recited, and kept diaries or copy books, and there were also *confabulationes* among the students as they prepared to put on Latin comedies. The latter were regarded as ideal pedagogical vehicles for increasing students’ active command of the Latin language. Even here Cicero was useful. Dialogues such as the *Tusculan Disputations* could serve as a model for those seeking to write Latin in a livelier, conversational form. The classroom routine was broken up by physical recreation.²³

At the same time, Sturm was not an advocate of studying Latin for its own sake but rather followed Melanchthon and Luther in maintaining that education should serve a larger purpose, namely the inculcation of the virtues of wisdom and eloquence. Such virtues were to be put to active use by the pious Christian alumni of Sturm’s academy as they spent the rest of their lives engaged in domestic, civic, and ecclesiastical activities. In his treatise presented

²¹ Ibid., 159.

²² Ibid., 193–194.

²³ Ibid., 355.

to the scholars of Strasbourg in 1538, "The Correct Opening of Elementary Schools of Letters," Sturm puts it succinctly: "We hold to the idea that the purpose of our studies is to produce a wise and eloquent piety."²⁴ Pupils at Sturm's school were to chant psalms daily.²⁵ Recitations included material drawn from the books of Kings, Genesis, and the Gospels.

If it was taken for granted that "religion is the first end of studies,"²⁶ that did not mean that the study and practice of Latin eloquence was regarded as anything but indispensable for those in training to be future leaders in society. Sturm observes that "knowledge of the physical world without elegant speech is usually base and barbarous and along with the decay of speech we see that a certain captious conviction of what wisdom is insinuates itself in men."²⁷ One of the chief goals of Sturm's academy was to make sure that its graduates were well equipped to make speeches of all sorts for any occasion, whether written out in advance or extemporaneous. These last "cannot be undertaken until after a long and assiduous habit of writing and of composing speeches in the mind."²⁸

In his own time, especially in his later years, Sturm was attacked fiercely for his single-minded dedication to the classics. His interest in preparing students for other higher professional degrees in addition to theology was held against him, as was his refusal to hire Matthias Flacius, whose polemical dogmatism can hardly have been attractive to the more irenic Sturm. In the second half of the sixteenth century, what Spitz calls "a theological literalism with less enthusiasm for classical studies" was in the process of "eroding the earlier cultural consensus on which Sturm's generation of Christian humanists had counted for support."²⁹ In 1581 he was asked to resign his position as "Perpetual Rector" of the academy he had helped to establish and led for so many years; his advanced age was cited as the cause.

Sturm has been regarded as exceedingly old-fashioned by more than one modern historian of education. He has been described as "an illiberal, tedious, impractical pedant of an irrelevant educational movement devoid of interest for us."³⁰ Certainly such a learning environment as the one he created in

24 Ibid., 69: *Propositum a nobis est, sapientem atque eloquentem pietatem finem esse studiorum.*

25 Otherwise, music seems not to have played as much of a role in the curriculum of Sturm's school as it did in those that followed the Wittenberg model more closely.

26 Ibid., 252.

27 Ibid., 74.

28 Ibid., 100.

29 Ibid., 38.

30 Ibid., 342.

Strasbourg could be regarded as entirely artificial, terribly difficult, and hardly worth the effort for anyone living in a modern, post-industrial age, where proficiency in the vernacular languages, not Latin, is seen as more valuable. Nonetheless, even Sturm's critics have had to acknowledge that he was in general terms "an exceptionally gifted educator whose concern with combining humanist learning and Christian devotion (*pietas litterata*) was to become his greatest legacy to Europeans from many different countries."³¹

It is possible, to be sure, that as an educator Sturm should be deemed less "progressive" than either Luther or Melanchthon. It seems unlikely, for instance, that he would have agreed with the sentiments expressed in a poem by a student of Melanchthon, Melchior Acontius, urging that young women should be taught:

In our time they are teaching tender girls to love books
 And the female sex to make use of its gifts.
 They make intellect flow into the arts, beauty
 Into its culture.
 Nor let such learned ones now be men alone.
 Let sweet girls vie with the males,
 As I see it, your glory will not be light
 For both sexes share the muses by common consent,
 I judge them to be less difficult for you!³²

Unlike Luther and other reformers, Sturm seems to have been somewhat oblivious to the possible value of educating females, children of the lower classes, or domestics. Instead, he concentrated on the intellectual formation of the sons of the nobility and the bourgeoisie along with a few poor students with academic potential (all male). A similar charge, of course, could be brought against Cicero. Both would no doubt have been surprised that their pedagogical emphases could ever be considered a deficiency. It was common for educators in antiquity (and the early modern period) to concentrate their attention on male elites.³³

³¹ Ibid., 342–343.

³² Ibid., 17.

³³ Perhaps because Sturm's concern was so clearly not with the doctrinal education of the average German youth in general, but with the intellectual attainments of future elites, historians of education like Gerald Strauss have simply assumed that Sturm could hardly be of much relevance to their studies. But the decision to ignore or even slight the stellar successes of schools like Sturm's in the sixteenth century may tell us as much about the

But even though his pedagogical aims and achievements may be deemed by many today as irrelevant, it would be a mistake to underestimate Sturm's enormous influence not only on education in Strasbourg but throughout Germany and elsewhere in Europe.³⁴ Latin schools in Basel, Augsburg, and elsewhere followed his pedagogical lead. His influence was particularly strong in Bohemia and Poland but extended as far as Hungary and Romania. He was in frequent correspondence with Roger Ascham, with whom the future Queen Elizabeth I studied Cicero. Ascham even named one of his children after the Strasbourg educator, whom he called "one of his two dearest friends."³⁵ The two had in common the extremely high regard in which they held "master Tully," from whom, Ascham declared, "commonlie I am never wont to dissent."³⁶ While in Strasbourg Calvin had taught at Sturm's academy; thereafter he established a popular and long-lived school in Geneva. Here, too, instruction in classical Latin played an important role; Cicero's letters, speeches, and *Paradoxa* were among the texts studied.³⁷ Peter Ramus, the famous French rhetorician, was one of Sturm's students and later his colleague. The Italian reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli was one of Sturm's close friends. Another of his students, Claude Baduel, went on to reform the University of Nîmes.

As Jesuit schools began to emerge and proliferate in the later sixteenth century, it is quite possible that their educational leaders were not only aware of Sturm's curriculum but adopted parts of it, including the pronounced emphasis on Cicero, for their own. Although Sturm's *De literarum ludis recte aperiendis* (1538) does predate even the earliest draft versions of the Jesuits' *Ratio studiorum* (the Jesuit order itself was not established until 1540), it could be argued, of course, that the temporal priority of one curriculum does not necessarily prove its influence over the other; both could owe their similarities to shared origins in a common third source (e.g., Low Country humanism). On the other hand, Sturm's curriculum was probably the single best known educational plan in all of Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century. It would have been difficult for Jesuit educators not to have been aware of it.

historians' own presuppositions as it does about the actual state of education in a city like Strasbourg in Sturm's day.

34 Spitz, *Sturm*, 383.

35 Sandys, *Classical Scholarship*, vol. 2, 267.

36 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 151. An English translation of Sturm's *Nobilitas literata* was published in London in 1570 (Mohrmann, "Oratorical Delivery," 81).

37 Significantly, as Irena Backus observes, in their final years at the Geneva academy, students "were expressly discouraged from learning rhetoric, a feature that distinguished the Genevan from the Strasbourg and the Melanchthonian paradigms" (Backus, "Protestantism," 337).

A comparison of the Jesuits' curriculum guide, *Ratio atque institutio studiorum*, with Sturm's observations of 1538 on the correct way to "open schools of letters," reveals some clear resemblances between the two. The former was not officially published until 1599, but it had been in development over the course of half a century, with two "trial program documents" published in 1586 and 1591. The *Ratio* was revised in 1616, but minimally, and then again in 1832. In the words of Claude Pavor, the *Ratio studiorum* of 1599 is "the most thoroughly elaborated official plan for the full Jesuit system of education,"³⁸ outlining the ideal course of study for Jesuit students from the early stages of learning to post-graduate work in theology.

Johann Sturm himself seemed to believe that the Jesuit curriculum was derived from his. Of the *Ratio studiorum*, he wrote to the scholars of Strasbourg in 1565 that he rejoiced on two accounts: "First because the Jesuits support us and cultivate good letters, object of all our pains and our great passion. In fact, I have seen the authors they explain, the exercises they use and their instructional method which is so close to ours, that it seems to be derived from our sources."³⁹

Like Sturm, the authors of the Jesuit curriculum stress the vital importance of speaking Latin. The practice is to be vigilantly and strictly maintained:

Above all, the practice of speaking Latin should be rigorously observed, except in those classes in which the students do not know Latin. It should be maintained in such a way that it is never permissible to make use of the vernacular in anything pertaining to class, and lapses should even be recorded. For this reason, the teacher should speak Latin all the time.⁴⁰

And Cicero is the undisputed stylistic model to be imitated for written Latin: "The subject for a composition should not be dictated spontaneously, but with careful forethought and usually from written notes. The theme should aim at an imitation of Cicero, as much as possible, and it should aim at the pattern of a certain narration, persuasion, congratulation, warning, and other such forms."⁴¹ Cicero's prose works were read throughout the grades. In the "Lowest Grammar," students were to read "only the easiest letters of Cicero"; in the "Middle Grammar," Cicero's *Ad familiares* (in addition to simple poetry from Ovid); in the "Highest Grammar," more of Cicero's letters in the first semester and in

³⁸ See Pavor, *Ratio studiorum*.

³⁹ Spitz, *Sturm*, 359.

⁴⁰ Transl. Pavor, *Ratio studiorum*, 142.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 147.

the second semester *De amicitia*, *De senectute*, and *Paradoxa*. Once grammar study was complete, there were daily readings in Cicero, especially his ethical works, as well as historians like Caesar, Sallust, Livy, and Curtius. In the second semester students would tackle Cicero's speeches. Rhetorical coursework was to include daily "prelections" in Cicero's rhetorical works.⁴²

J.B. Herman, S.J., has argued that the resemblances between the two curricula are mostly superficial, but Roger Chartier (and others) have found no substantial differences between the curricula of schools following Sturm's pedagogical principles and the Jesuit schools.⁴³ Such differing perspectives are not, perhaps, all that surprising.⁴⁴ Observations about similarities and differences may depend on what specific aspects of the respective curricula or pedagogies are being compared. Certainly, one major similarity shared by the two curricula is their consensus that "Cicero is the one model of style."⁴⁵ But there are clear differences, too. Chief among the provisions for "the Professor of Sacred Scripture" and for "the Professor of the Hebrew Language" in the *Ratio studiorum* is that they must be sure to defend the Vulgate, "the version approved by the Church."⁴⁶ That such a degree of deference to the Vulgate is lacking altogether in the approach that Sturm took to the study of the Bible is to be expected, given the Protestant dedication to studying the Bible in the original languages and producing vernacular translations.

Classicists have criticized Sturm and the Jesuits alike for privileging the claims of piety in education (*pietas litterata*) and have questioned the legitimacy of their humanism, given the practical and vocational ends to which they set education.⁴⁷ To be consistent, such a critique would have to be applied as well to the humanist educators who antedate Sturm and the Jesuits. After all, it was Erasmus who objected to strict Ciceronianism if it meant so confounding language that one risked becoming "unchristian." Eloquence is not an end in itself, Erasmus declares in his *Ciceronianus*: "To know Christ" and to celebrate his glory is the "goal of all learning and eloquence."⁴⁸ Erasmus's

42 On the high regard for the classics in general in traditional Jesuit education, see Cueva, et al., *Jesuit Education*.

43 Spitz, *Sturm*, 359–360.

44 Differences of perspective on such questions may also be shaped by differing confessional loyalties, more attenuated (or disguised) today than in the 16th century, but still present. The subtitle of Cochlaeus's book on rhetoric, *Rhetorica divina* (1531), makes his pointed bias unmistakably plain: *Ars vincendi haereticos Lutheranos ex sacris scripturis*.

45 Pavur, *Ratio studiorum*, 226–227.

46 Ibid., 55–61.

47 See, e.g., Bolgar, *Classical Heritage*, 350–351.

48 Knott, *Ciceronian*, 447.

interest in recovering the purest forms of Latin eloquence was not one he pursued for its own sake, but because it was connected integrally with his vision of a *philosophia Christi*.

It would be a mistake to project back onto the early modern period, whether one is speaking of the Renaissance or the Reformation, more modern presumptions about how the teaching and learning of Cicero is to proceed using pedagogical methodologies associated with later intellectual concepts such as classical philology or *Altertumswissenschaft*. Knowledge for knowledge's sake was not an important educational goal in the early modern period. The notion that the study of the classics, including Cicero, could or should be undertaken completely apart from the cultivation of Christian piety or without application to civic life would have been perceived by humanists and church reformers alike as quite alien to their larger purposes.

Given the widespread success of the Jesuits and their educational agenda, it is no surprise that Cicero would continue to be influential for generations of students to come in all countries where the order's influence was strong. At the Jesuit school in Bologna in the last quarter of the seventeenth century, students were still using Latin exclusively to address their teachers at the risk of lowering their grade if they did not.⁴⁹ Famous literary figures who benefited from a Jesuit education include playwrights such as Corneille and Molière, philosophers like Descartes, Voltaire, Montesquieu, Diderot, and literary authors such as Tasso, Calderón, and James Joyce, to mention just a few names.⁵⁰

The Teacher of Modern Europe

In the wake of the Council of Trent (1545–63), there was no question that Latin would continue to be used as the language of the liturgy and the Catholic church's official version of the Bible in regions and countries over which it held sway. Despite calls for Latin's abandonment, its use in the Mass persisted until the 1960s and the reforms of Vatican II. At the same time, one of the most obvious, immediate, and long-lasting results of the Protestant Reformation was the transformation of the traditional Latin liturgy into an order of service that would be understandable by all in languages such as German, English, or

49 Waquet, *Latin*, 23.

50 For similarities between the educational vision of Melanchthon and the Jesuits ("Calvin's schools contrasted more sharply with the Jesuit colleges"), see Scaglione, *Liberal Arts*, Chap. 2. More specific (focusing on the development of emphases on probabilism and casuistry) is Maryks, *Saint Cicero and the Jesuits*.

French. But even if Latin was not to be much used in "the temples" of post-Reformation northern Europe, the language of Cicero was most certainly taught and learned in "the academy" at all levels, beginning in classrooms where pupils were just starting to read and write and continuing all the way up through advanced instruction at the university level.

To be sure, Cicero (or "Tully," as he was often called in English) was not the only classical Latin author studied in schools. Terence was frequently taught as well in the earlier curricula. His comedies could help increase facility in conversational Latin. Caesar's *Gallic Wars* assumed greater importance in schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The works of Phaedrus, Cornelius Nepos, Sallust, Horace, Seneca, and other Latin authors were also commonly read in schools. But, throughout all of these centuries, there continued to stand Cicero, one of the twin giants of Latin literature (Virgil was the other), towering above the other curriculum authors. Cicero received the same high degree of respect, centuries later, from Trollope and Tolstoy as he had earlier from Petrarch and Melanchthon. In comparison, other Latin writers, no matter how worthy or interesting in their own right, often came to resemble in the eyes of many teachers and their students something of "a rag-bag of rather sorry authors."⁵¹

Latin language instruction in general and Cicero in particular were both assigned a privileged position in schools all over Europe in the centuries following the Reformation. In post-Reformation France, for example, elementary Latin was long regarded as the basic literacy course (as opposed to French) even in rural schools. In the seventeenth century, Cicero's letters *Ad familiares* were among the texts that were to be studied in the first two classes.⁵² At the next levels, students would read one of Cicero's moral treatises, to be followed by the speeches.⁵³ As late as the second half of the eighteenth century, spoken Latin was still insisted upon at the Avesnes Oratory, even on the playground. Here and elsewhere, a student spy (sometimes referred to as a *lupus* or "wolf") helped to enforce the requirement.⁵⁴ It was only with the arrival of the French Revolution that Latin began to lose some of its curricular preeminence. At the Oratory of Cambrai students were allowed to speak French (but only in

51 Waquet, *Latin*, 34. In all fairness, we should observe that the necessities of efficient instruction often require teachers to concentrate on a smaller number of texts and authors judged to be less difficult or obscure. To some extent, Cicero's curricular persistence may have been the beneficiary of such less than high-minded pedagogical considerations.

52 Waquet, *Latin*, 33.

53 *Ibid.*, 33.

54 Burke, *Languages and Communities*, 54.

the morning). Eventually, courses in physics and mathematics were taught in French, but Latin still had to be used for instruction in philosophy.⁵⁵ Cicero's letters, treatises, and speeches were so popular in the college in Limoges that a bookseller there in the 1750s gave his shop the name "The Ciceronians' Room."⁵⁶ Even after the reforms in French education that followed the Revolution, some of them fairly radical, the study of Latin continued to be fairly popular. As late as the 1950s, about half of the children in France were still choosing the classical languages track, although by then the requirement to speak and write Latin had been dropped from the *lycée* curriculum.⁵⁷ Latin was entrenched at the university level. The area in which the Sorbonne University is located in Paris is still called "the Latin Quarter." Until the end of the *Ancien Régime*, lectures and examinations at the university level in France were given in Latin. The curriculum of the Collège Royale was published in Latin until 1791.⁵⁸

In England, a Latin school (St Paul's in London) was founded by Colet in 1509.⁵⁹ Written Latin composition (known familiarly as "the gerund grind") continued to be practiced in English schools through the nineteenth century. Early in the seventeenth century, it has been claimed, a pupil at Bury St Edmunds would have composed almost 3000 Latin and Greek verses over the course of his years of study there. When John Waldegrave arrived at Eton as a seven-year-old, he found it to be "a very odd place ... full of boys and Latin."⁶⁰ In the 1860s, 26 masters at Eton (out of a total of 31) were assigned to teach ancient Greek and Latin.⁶¹ At Oxford University, students were required to speak Latin outside the classroom, including at table, according to a decree of Archbishop Laud in 1636. The decree remained in effect until 1854.⁶² At Cambridge, it was not until the early nineteenth century that "the age-old tradition according to which all lectures in divinity had been given in Latin" was abandoned.⁶³

For any who might dare to criticize such a heavy emphasis on Latin, there was no lack of doughty defenders such as Edward Copleston, provost of Oriel College, Oxford, who met the charge leveled against the study of the classics by the *Edinburgh Review* with great spirit. The newspaper's objection was that

55 Waquet, *Latin*, 11.

56 *Ibid.*, 33.

57 *Ibid.*, 15–17.

58 *Ibid.*, 11.

59 For a comprehensive study of Cicero's reception in Tudor England, see Jones, *Master Tully*, Chap. 6.

60 Waquet, *Latin*, 23.

61 *Ibid.*, 27.

62 *Ibid.*, 25.

63 Stephen Neill, *Interpretation of the New Testament*, 5.

such an education produced students who knew "minute points of Grammar and the mechanism of Latin verse," but were unable "to reason, *to imagine*, and to invent," because they had been instructed only how "to conjugate, decline, and derive." Copleston replied:

It is not that we seek to stock the world with new poems, but to give play in the most effectual manner to the *poetic faculty*, which exists to a certain degree in all minds, and which, like every other faculty, ought to lie wholly uncultivated in none. At least it is an irreparable injury to young minds, if it be entirely neglected. They may still be useful members in the mechanism of society, if the powers of reasoning and calculation only be encouraged: but they lose that intellectual charm, from which life borrows its loveliest graces; they lose, in a refined age, the means of recommending Virtue herself, if taste and elegance be not found in her train.⁶⁴

Against any who would suggest that instruction in the sciences was more important than the humanities, Copleston argues that such an education may produce "a skillful agriculturist, an improver of manufactures, a useful inspector of roads, mines, and canals: but all that distinguishing grace, which a liberal education imparts, he foregoes for ever." It is "a cruel experiment," he writes, whose result is "not only a moral blank, but an intellectual barrenness—a poverty of fancy and invention, a dearth of historical and poetical illustration, a want of all those ideas which decorate and enliven truth, which enable us to live over again the times that are past, to combine the produce of widely distant ages, and to multiply into one another the component parts of each."⁶⁵ Thomas Arnold, the celebrated headmaster of Rugby, where the classics constituted roughly half of the school's curriculum, once remarked: "Expel Greek and Latin from your schools, and you confine the views of the existing generation to themselves and their immediate predecessors."⁶⁶

64 Gamble, *Great Tradition*, 505–507.

65 Ibid., 513.

66 Ibid., 515. For a fictionalized perspective on Thomas Arnold and Rugby, see Thomas Hughes's popular novel, *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. In Evelyn Waugh's 1947 novella, *Scott-King's Modern Europe*, a classics teacher at an English public school gives a spirited defense of the value of the study of Latin and Greek. In the face of parents' demands that their children be prepared in school for the modern workforce, he declares that "it would be very wicked indeed to do anything to fit a boy for the modern world." In reviewing Waugh's book, George Orwell observed that one could agree with the author "that a classical education is the best prophylactic against insanity, and yet still feel that he could fight

In Spain, it was only in 1813 that Castilian Spanish was made the language of instruction in universities instead of Latin. In Italy, in the second half of the eighteenth century, professors were still giving their lectures in Latin. Latin continued as the language of instruction in the Piedmont countryside until the early nineteenth century. In Switzerland, students preparing for the Academy in Lausanne still concentrated on learning how to speak, read, and write classical Latin (with the exception of practice in preaching, when French was to be used). In Holland, an ordinance establishing Latin as the language of the schools “remained in force until 1815.”⁶⁷ In Poland, despite attempts to eliminate Latin instruction in parish schools in 1774, it was reinstated by popular demand in 1788. In post-Petrine Russia, there were 26 colleges by 1750 with a Latin curriculum. Educators in Kiev copied from the Jesuit model and the academy in Moscow.⁶⁸ In the next century, Leo Tolstoy helped to revise the curriculum along Prussian lines, with Latin (and Greek) taking up over 40 per cent of the syllabus in the *gimnazii*.⁶⁹ It was not until 1917 that classical studies were virtually eliminated from the curriculum after the Communist Revolution.⁷⁰

And certainly, in the cities and states where Lutheranism took hold, the study of Latin and Cicero occupied a prominent and remarkably persistent place in the curriculum. In Braunschweig in the sixteenth-century, for instance, the first text given to pupils at “the truly Latin school” was the Latin version of the Lord’s Prayer. Over 30 percent of reading time in school (after 1651) was devoted to Cicero’s works, especially his letters.⁷¹ The boys were instructed to use “Latin in all places,” and it is estimated that the study of Latin, including dialogues, “represented between 67 and 77 per cent of school activity.”⁷² Starting in the seventeenth century, even in those German schools where greater priority was given to the study of religion (which was to be taught in the vernacular), Latin still “retained the leading place in real schooling, and took up the bulk of the timetable.” And, just as important perhaps, it “continued to

the modern world more effectively if he would occasionally turn aside to read a sixpenny pamphlet on Marxism” (*New York Times*; Feb. 20, 1948).

67 Waquet, *Latin*, 22.

68 *Ibid.*, 22.

69 See Tolstoy’s autobiographical novel, *Youth*, Chapter 12, for his reflections on his youthful experiences translating Cicero. While Sergei Uvarov served as Minister of Education (1833–49), “a special emphasis was put on Latin and Greek” (Tolkien, *Russia and the Classics*, 20).

70 Waquet, *Latin*, 28–29.

71 *Ibid.*, 33.

72 *Ibid.*, 20.

be the language of communication between masters and pupils, except in the youngest classes."⁷³

In Germany as elsewhere in Europe, Latin was used as the language of instruction at the university level well into the nineteenth century. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who was taught to speak Latin at home by his father, could still speak the ancient language "fluently" while he was attending the University of Strasbourg.⁷⁴ The historian Leopold von Ranke, who came from a family of Lutheran pastors, gave his inaugural lecture in 1863 at the University of Berlin in Latin.⁷⁵ He attended *Pforta*, as did Friedrich Nietzsche, classmate of Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Möllendorff, one of the preeminent classical scholars of his age. Like Nietzsche, Heinrich Schliemann was the son of a Lutheran pastor. He attended the *Gymnasium* at Neustrelitz before going on to make a fortune as a businessman and undertake momentous excavations at Troy and other Bronze Age sites (beginning in 1871). Even after the advent of *Neuhumanismus* with its increased emphasis on Greek studies, Latin predominated. It continued to be taught from the third to eighth school year in nineteenth-century Prussia. After 1834 two of the six written tests were in Latin. This was also true in Bavaria. By 1837, many German students were taking eight to ten hours of Latin a week, nearly a third of their school time.⁷⁶ As late as 1990, 35 percent of West Germany's *Gymnasium* students were studying Latin.⁷⁷

What held true of German cities and states can also be applied to the educational situation in Scandinavian countries like Denmark and Sweden, which became Lutheran in the sixteenth century. Olaus Theophilus, a student of Melanchthon and headmaster of a school in Copenhagen, answered the question as to the value of Latin composition in 1573 in the most absolute of fashions: "Why is the teaching of Latin composition necessary? Without it God cannot be known. Without it we are mired in damnation. Through Latin composition we weaken—no, overthrow—the empire of the devil. It is necessary for the salvation of our souls."⁷⁸ Echoing Luther's convictions that theology will not

73 Ibid., 21. As late as 1835, at the *Gymnasium* in Trier, it was not that unusual for a student like Karl Marx to write a paper (on Augustus's principate) for his *Abitur* in Latin (Ling, *Karl Marx and Religion*, 5).

74 Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 247; Waquet, *Latin*, 154. Early on, Goethe even expressed his desire (unfulfilled) to become a professor of Latin.

75 Waquet, *Latin*, 26. After finishing his studies at the University of Leipzig, Ranke taught classics for a number of years at a *Gymnasium* in Frankfurt an der Oder.

76 Waquet, *Latin*, 27.

77 Ibid., 30.

78 *Paraenesis seu praeceptiones sapientes et utiles de vitae ac studiorum honesta formatione* (Copenhagen, 1573); transl. Ostler, *Ad Infinitum*, 278.

remain pure without the study of the ancient languages, Theophilus makes it clear that he regards Latin composition as more than a helpful intellectual exercise; it is essential for salvation. Farther north, in Sweden, Latin was actively used, especially in academic contexts (such as the University of Uppsala), well into the nineteenth century.⁷⁹

One of the most conspicuous examples of Ciceronian stylistic influences lies not in the area of schoolroom exercises or scholarly treatises but in the remarkable English prose of eighteenth-century authors of the British Isles. One of the best known of these writers was Samuel Johnson, who as a young man “saturated himself in Cicero’s Latin,” wrote very fine Latin of his own, and translated extensive sections of the *Somnium Scipionis*. Johnson spoke in glowing terms of Cicero’s “elegance and magnificence.” M.N. Austin draws the following “Plutarchan parallels” between Johnson and Cicero:

Both were masters of prose expression and of oral utterance, *ore rotundo*, one in public, the other in private; both wrote verse, one with success, the other with technical skill; both were concerned with literature, its practice, its criticism, its improvement; both were great patriots and took sides on public issues vehemently; both had in their different ways the genius of friendship and left in their epistolary reliques the best memorials of their real selves.⁸⁰

Rolfe points out that while Johnson was Ciceronian “in his manner,” he failed to vary long sentences “with short, pithy ones,” as was Cicero’s custom. Johnson employed the verbal “broadsword,” but “never used the dagger” (*pugiunculus*).⁸¹

Another prominent example of a Ciceronian prose stylist from the same milieu was Edward Gibbon, author of the monumental *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (first volume published in 1776). He is supposed to have read all of Cicero after he left Oxford.⁸² Gibbon’s style has been described as “sonorous, rich, and symmetrical” and “Ciceronian in its periodicity and copia.” But, as Hight observes:

Gibbon thought, perhaps, that he was writing Ciceronian prose; but it was the rolling prose of the perorations only; while in a single speech Cicero covers four or five other methods of expression, rapid, humorous,

79 See, in general, Helander, *Neo-Latin Literature in Sweden*.

80 Austin, “Cicero and Samuel Johnson,” 3–14.

81 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 152.

82 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 159.

sharply interrogative, fiercely expostulatory, all untouched by Gibbon. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* is a perpetual peroration.⁸³

Cicero's speeches must have been known well enough by both speaker and audience that Gibbon's contemporary Edmund Burke was able to attack Warren Hastings for his role in the mismanagement of India by making reference to Cicero's Verrine Orations, in which he prosecuted a notoriously corrupt proconsul of Sicily.⁸⁴ Even in the second half of the nineteenth century, it was possible for John Henry Newman to declare (in a letter written in 1869) of Cicero's influence on his own English style: "As to patterns for imitation, the only master I have ever had (which is strange considering the differences of the languages) is Cicero. I think I owe a great deal to him, and as far as I know to no one else. His great mastery of Latin is shown especially in his clearness." The essay by Newman on Cicero that appeared in *Historical Sketches* of 1872 drew heavily on Conyers Middleton's popular biography of Cicero (1741).⁸⁵

In France, ecclesiastical oratory flourished in the second half of the seventeenth century. Preachers like Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet combined features of biblical rhetoric and the preaching of the church fathers with Ciceronian rhetoric. In François Fénelon's *Dialogue sur l'éloquence*, an influential rhetorical treatise that discussed preaching (*la chaire*) in particular, Cicero is one of the models "of noble eloquence" whom he cites approvingly.⁸⁶ In eighteenth-century France, Cicero was a favorite of *philosophes* like Voltaire and Diderot, who appropriated Cicero for their own, as their prototype of rationality.⁸⁷ As Voltaire proclaimed: "We hiss them off the stage then, those rude scholastics, who ruled over us so long: we honor Cicero, who taught us how to think."⁸⁸ No longer, to be sure, was Cicero appreciated because he anticipated Christian virtues. Instead the *philosophes* valued his eloquence and, even more importantly, the rich fodder he provided, especially in his dialogues, for their brand of humanism.⁸⁹ Voltaire wrote a play in which Cicero is the hero, *Rome Sauvée, ou Catilina* (1752). He also penned fictionalized letters from Memmius to Cicero

83 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 348.

84 Ibid., 328.

85 Vance, "Victorian," 88. On Middleton and his life of Cicero, see Ingram, "Conyers Middleton's Cicero," 95–123.

86 Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 266. On Bossuet and Fénelon, see Old, *Reading and Preaching of the Scriptures*, vol. 4, 474ff.

87 Gay, *Enlightenment*, 105–109.

88 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 145.

89 Kaminski, "Neoclassicism," 69.

which he used to express his own enlightened, skeptical views on religion.⁹⁰ Voltaire pretended that the letters had been discovered in the Vatican Library, and that he had translated them into French from a Russian translation.⁹¹

Voltaire's German admirer, Frederick the Great, took the *Tusculan Disputations* along with him on his campaigns and ordered all of Cicero's works to be translated into German.⁹² In a letter to Voltaire, Frederick declared that he loved Cicero "immensely" and that "never has there been in the world a second Cicero." He regarded *De officiis* to be the "best work in the field of ethical philosophy that has ever been written, or will ever be written."⁹³ The Scottish philosopher David Hume was also influenced by the works of Cicero, in particular *De officiis* and *De natura deorum*.⁹⁴

Voltaire believed that Cicero would keep the world safe from despotism. Many of those who favored the French Revolution and the establishment of a republic in place of the traditional monarchy admired Cicero for his opposition to Caesar's regal ambitions. Everyone would have understood the reference when, in a speech he delivered in 1792, Jean-Baptiste Louvet described Robespierre as Cicero's great foe Catiline. (Robespierre defended himself in a speech based on Cicero's *Pro Sulla*.) The journalist Camille Desmoulins used Ciceronian similes from *Pro Roscio* to compare French prosecutors to watchdogs on the Capitoline Hill. Among the Girondins, a group of republican politicians, Vergniaud was known as "Cicero."⁹⁵

Bach, the Latin Teacher

Let us turn now to a particular example of Cicero's influence, perhaps less obvious than the ones just discussed, upon one of the most famous products of the Lutheran Reformation, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750). Bach is far better known today, of course, as a composer and church musician than as a Latinist. He was a German Lutheran, after all, thoroughly steeped in Luther's translation of the Bible, to which he devoted much of his choral music.⁹⁶ But he was also quite well versed in classical Latinity.

90 Sharpe, "Cicero, Voltaire, and the *Philosophes*," 329–356.

91 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 153.

92 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 154–155.

93 Zielinski, *Cicero*, 247–248, as translated in Merolle, *Mommsen and Cicero*, 89.

94 Des Jardins, "Terms of *De Officiis*," 237–242. In America, Ralph Waldo Emerson's reading of Hume and Cicero chipped away at the certainties of his Unitarian faith.

95 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 397–398.

96 See Leaver, *J.S. Bach and Scripture*.

At the age of eight, Bach was enrolled as a *Quintaner* in the same Latin school that Luther had attended some 200 years earlier, St. George's Latin School in Eisenach. As Christoph Wolff observes, the fact that young Sebastian could directly enter the *Quinta* of the Latin school means that he must have already mastered the subjects taught in the *Sexta*. The subjects taught in *Quinta* included reading and writing in Latin. Beginning with the *Quarta*, the primary language of instruction was Latin. When he was ten, Bach enrolled in the *Lyceum Illustre Gleichense* in Ohrdruf as a *Tertianer* and finished this level at the top of his class. Latin exercises in the *Tertia* were based on Reyher's *Dialogi seu colloquia puerilia*, and at this stage Bach would have also begun to study Greek. He graduated second in his class from the *Secunda*, when he would have read the letters of Cicero. At an age fully four years ahead of the average, Bach became a *Primaner*. He did not finish at Ohrdruf but instead transferred to the prestigious St. Michael's school in Lüneburg where he would have been taught the principles of Aristotelian rhetoric (using Heinrich Tolle's *Rhetorica Gottingensis*). He also would have read Cicero's Catilinarian orations and continued his study of Greek and Latin (including Cicero's *De officiis* and letters).⁹⁷

Bach's encounter with Latin in his early years was not something that he merely endured as so many others have; his high ranking in his classes suggests otherwise. Nor, it also seems clear, did he quickly forget it. Bach continued to use and even teach Latin throughout the course of his life. To many of his compositions he affixed the initials *S.D.G.*, standing for *Soli Deo gloria* and began others with *J.J.*, standing for *Jesu, juva*.⁹⁸ And, as we shall see, he set Latin texts to memorable music.

Even in Bach's time, Latin still continued to play an important role in the liturgical life of Lutheran churches, especially those in cities with Latin schools. While popular, Luther's "German Mass" did not entirely replace the Latin *Formula Missae*, nor would Luther have wanted it to; he hoped that Latin services would continue and saw them as especially useful for young people, whom he did not want to be like the Bohemian Brethren who "have imprisoned their faith in their own language to such an extent that they can speak understandably and clearly to no one."⁹⁹ In cities like Bach's Leipzig, the services of Matins and Vespers were still being celebrated in Latin well into the eighteenth

97 Wolff, *Johann Sebastian Bach*, 25–58, offers a comprehensive overview of Bach's early schooling. The beginning Latin textbook that he most likely used was very popular at that time, Johannes Amos Comenius's *Latinitatis vestibulum sive primi ad Latinam linguam aditus*.

98 Leaver, *Music as Preaching*, 10.

99 WA 19,74. Rather than simply rejecting the medieval mass outright, as other reformers insisted on doing because of its theological association with the idea of "sacrifice," Luther

century.¹⁰⁰ Even in German liturgies, key Latin phrases from the Mass such as *Agnus Dei*, or titles of canticles such as the *Nunc dimittis*, the *Te Deum*, or the *Magnificat*, were incorporated without translation.¹⁰¹ These continue to be used (if not always understood) in many Lutheran churches to the present day.

Even the famous German Lutheran chorale invites further consideration from this perspective. While some Reformation traditions restricted singing in church only to the Psalms, early Lutheran composers did not confine themselves solely to biblical texts but more than once returned to the Latin hymns of the early church.¹⁰² *Veni, redemptor gentium*, for instance, by Ambrose, is the basis for Luther's *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*. Luther's German translation of portions of a Latin hymn by Sedulius for Christmas and Epiphany were included in early Lutheran hymnals. The medieval hymn *Salve, caput cruentatum* was rendered into the popular German chorale, *O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*, by Paul Gerhardt.¹⁰³ The latter was one of Bach's favorite chorales.

While some of the reformers shared Luther's avowed interest in cultivating music, none could match his enthusiastic advocacy for it as one of the great gifts of God—second only to theology and indeed the word of God itself.¹⁰⁴ According to Luther, music does not compete with theology but rather works with it in a complementary way, an *ancilla verbi*, so to speak, reinforcing divine truths that are apprehended by the mind abstractly and powerfully, driving the words home emotionally and even physiologically. To the composer Ludwig Senfl, Luther wrote that the biblical prophets presented their theology “not in the form of geometry, arithmetic, or astronomy, but as music.” In this way theology and music were “very closely connected, and the truth was proclaimed via Psalms and songs.”¹⁰⁵ In his foreword to Georg Rhau's musical collection, *Symphoniae iucundae* of 1538, Luther marvels at “God's absolutely perfect wisdom in his marvelous work of music,” and suggests that for those “who are at

and his followers revised it sparingly, preserving traditional liturgical forms that they did not see as clearly opposed to the Gospel.

100 Stiller, *Liturgical Life*, 112. Even in Calvin's Geneva it was not uncommon for the *Pater noster* and the *Credo* to be recited in Latin by those called before the consistory to prove their faith (Waquet, *Latin*, 78).

101 Bach's *Magnificat* (1723) is the first of his major musical treatments of liturgical Latin texts.

102 On the importance of the continuity of liturgical traditions in early Lutheranism, see Schalk, *Music in Early Lutheranism*.

103 Latin hymns continued to be sung in Lutheran churches not only in translation but in the original, long after Luther's time. See now the collection in Carver, *Liber Hymnorum*.

104 WATR 3,636 and WA 50,371.

105 WAB 5,639.

least somewhat moved by it," there is nothing in the world that is "more marvelous." He concludes that those who are unmoved by it deserve only to hear "the music of pigs."¹⁰⁶

When he returned from hiding in the Wartburg after the Diet of Worms, Luther reacted angrily to the iconoclasm that had taken place in his absence. The people of the city, led by Karlstadt and others more radical than Luther, went about smashing statues and destroying stained glass.¹⁰⁷ For Luther, the arts were not dangerous worldly distractions but divine gifts. In fact, the Creator himself was the greatest of artists: "Surely the contemplation of the whole creation, and especially of the simplest grasses of the fields and the adornment of the earth, proves that our Lord God is an artist like unto none."¹⁰⁸ Given Luther's full-throated support of music (he himself played the lute), it is not surprising that an astonishing number of composers were to emerge in the post-Reformation era who wrote music for Lutheran worship. Their names include Hassler, Praetorius, Schütz, Schein, Scheidt, Pachelbel, Telemann, and an astonishing number of members of the extended Bach family.

Music and Latin were closely associated in Bach's day. Indeed, the study of music was considered almost an extension or continuation of rhetoric. Music theory (not performance) had long been considered part of the *quadrivium*, and, of the arts of the *trivium*, rhetoric was seen as music's most important prerequisite study. The crucial connection between music and rhetoric is made clear in a little poem written in 1718 by the composer who was called to the *Thomasschule* in Leipzig before Bach was offered the job, but who turned it down, Georg Philipp Telemann:

Music can be very well connected with Latin,
As was already the case long ago in antiquity.
A head that is capable of comprehending harmony
Recognizes also that Cicero is no dwarf (*Kobold*).¹⁰⁹

From the musicological treatises of the Baroque period, we learn that the study of music not only included subjects we would associate today with music theory and composition but also made use of classical rhetorical notions for the construction of various kinds of discourse, such as *inventio* (Bach wrote

¹⁰⁶ WA 50,373.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example, the treatise he wrote to address the unrest in Wittenberg (LW 45:53-74).

¹⁰⁸ Transl. Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 221. For a comprehensive study of Luther's aesthetic sensibilities, see Preuss, *Martin Luther der Künstler*.

¹⁰⁹ Latin text in Leonhardt, *Latin*, 255.

“Inventions” for the keyboard) and *dispositio*, and applied to music figures and tropes traditionally associated with rhetorical theory and practice, such as aposiopesis, hyperbole, and many others.¹¹⁰ As the Italian baroque composer Francesco Geminiani puts it in his “Art of Playing the Violin” (1751): “All good music should be composed in imitation of a discourse.”¹¹¹

Even when purely instrumental, Bach’s music, like other baroque compositions, can be seen as highly rhetorical, designed to do more than appeal aesthetically to the ear as sound alone. If one considers how the music corresponds with and enhances the text in Bach’s choral music, the combination of the two, the words and the musical notes, produce an amplified effect that serves not only to delight but also to move the listener, for whom, Bach well knew, faith was never simply a matter of intellectual apprehension, but an emotion that depends upon hearing (cf. Rom. 10:17). In fact, it is possible to analyze some of Bach’s music as preaching, as Robin Leaver has done, applying the structural pattern for sermons espoused by “the old Lutheran theologians: *exordium*, *propositio*, *tractatio*, *applicatio*, and *conclusio*” to his *Passio Domini J.C. secundum Evangelistam Matthaeum* (St. Matthew Passion).¹¹²

In 1723 Bach applied for the vacant Cantor position at St. Thomaskirche in Leipzig. The successful candidate for the job was also to teach four hours of Latin each week. This teaching assignment was not an unimportant consideration. The *Thomasschule* in Leipzig in the second quarter of the eighteenth century was a veritable hotbed for Latin, rhetoric, and Cicero. Johann Matthias Gesner, a friend of Bach who produced an edition of Quintilian, served as its rector starting in 1730 until he left to become professor of poetry and eloquence at Göttingen.¹¹³ In the year Bach applied for a job there, the rector of the school was Johann Heinrich Ernesti, a professor of poetry at the University of Leipzig. He was a prolific classicist and was well known for his edition of fourteen of Cicero’s speeches. Leonhardt suggests that it was precisely Bach’s lack of experience or interest in teaching Latin, not any deficiency in his musical abilities, that caused those who were trying to fill the *Kantor* position at the *Thomasschule* to rank his candidacy lower than that of Telemann’s. Once he was hired, Bach was not at all sorry, it seems, to delegate quickly his responsibilities to teach Latin to Carl Friedrich Pezold, a Latin scholar in his own right, best known as a publisher of a Latin journal in Leipzig, *Miscellanea*

110 On the use of rhetorical figures in German Baroque music, see Bartel, *Musica Poetica*.

111 Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence*, 14.

112 Leaver, *Music as Preaching*, 21.

113 See Kirkendale, “Source for Bach’s Musical Offering,” 88–141, for the influence of Quintilian on Bach.

Lipsiensia.¹¹⁴ But even though it may be that Bach did not really enjoy the prospect of teaching Cicero's language to schoolboys in Leipzig, this should not stop us from appreciating how supremely rhetorical Bach's music is or how well he adapts the Latin language to music.

One of the best testimonies to Bach's love of Latin, the traditional language of the Roman Catholic liturgy, may well be his monumental Mass in B Minor.¹¹⁵ It is somewhat unusual that a Lutheran composer would have put his hand to a *missa tota*, as Bach did, late in life, without any apparent commissioning of the work. He never heard it performed in its entirety. We shall consider here Bach's musical treatments of just three of the Latin words in the *Credo*. The Latin text is the *Symbolum Nicenum*, the product of the famous Council convened by Constantine in Nicaea in 325 to address the issues raised by Arianism. Charlemagne mandated its use in the Carolingian Mass as early as 798, and it began to be used regularly in the Roman rite in the eleventh century.¹¹⁶

The first word is *crucifixus*, which in medieval Latin hymns such as *Stabat mater* is treated as though it were two trochees. The trochaic tetrameter was the martial meter used by Caesar's legions as they marched (long/short; long/short). It was Roman soldiers, of course, who crucified Jesus. As it is used here in the Mass in B Minor, the word has a steady, repeated regularity which would be harder to achieve with the German equivalent: *gekreuzigt*.

In the ancient Creed, couched in the familiar and simple language of the *sermo humilis*, the word *crucifixus* is used just once; Bach repeats it eighteen times. This is a baroque exploitation of the familiar rhetorical technique of anaphora. *Ad Herennium* (4.13.19) describes the figure's powerful effect and appropriate use as follows: "This figure not only has a great deal of charm, but also much seriousness (*gravitas*) and pungency (*acrimonia*); for this reason it seems best employed to adorn and amplify one's style" (LCL 403,276).¹¹⁷ What is possibly the figure's most important function goes unmentioned in *Ad Herennium*, perhaps because it was so obvious. Anaphora was a way to make sure, as any ancient schoolmaster knew, that the word repeated would be planted

114 Leonhardt, *Latin*, 256–258. One of the longest articles in the journal (over 150 pages), *De officii scholarum, contra impietatem seculi*, argues strongly for keeping Latin as "the only acceptable international language of science."

115 Butt, *Bach: Mass in B Minor*, 14.

116 Stauffer, *Bach: Mass in B Minor*, 4.

117 Caplan adduces an illustrative example of *repetitio* from *De oratore* 2.55.226 in which one senses a certain degree of *acrimonia*: "You dare behold the light of day? You dare look these people in the face? You dare present yourself in the forum, within the City, in the plain view of the citizens? You do not tremble in fear of that corpse, you do not tremble in fear of the very images?" (Transl. LCL 403,276.)

deeply in the memory. *Repetitio mater memoriae* ("Repetition is the mother of memory"). It is hard to imagine any other setting of *crucifixus* in which the word's seriousness and recriminating significance is implanted so unforgettably in the listener's mind and heart.

In accord with the baroque aesthetic sensibilities of Bach's age, the repetition is taken to an extreme, far beyond what would be expected in classical Latin prose or poetry.¹¹⁸ But the extravagant use of the figure is not just for effect. The unrelenting repetition of the word *crucifixus* may be meant to suggest the methodical placing of one heavy laden foot before the other, the inevitability of time marching on for all humans, even for the God-man, as the hour of death approaches and Jesus makes his slow, steady way to be crucified, carrying his cross. Bach employs an insistent ground bass, achieving the same kind of effect that one might expect from a *passacaglia*. The time signature (3/2) is often associated with the *sarabande*, a majestic dance movement.¹¹⁹ Crucifixion was a death normally reserved for slaves who tried to escape. They were hustled unceremoniously to their death, but this, by contrast, is a dignified procession; it is the "King of the Jews" who is making his way slowly but without wavering to the place of crucifixion. The steady repetition in the words and music has reminded some listeners of the business-like hammering of nails at a Roman crucifixion.

The passage concludes in the most arresting way with the Latin words *Sepultus est*, when all becomes gradually silent, just barely a whisper, as Bach cuts out the orchestra, and the only sound that is left is an expiration, the alliterative consonant cluster "st." Here, too, there is a repetition: three "s's" in the space of two words. The sibilant "s" is almost impossible to sing, unlike the nasal "n" sound at the end of the German word usually used to translate the Latin expression in the Creed, *begraben*, which can be held out, almost like a vowel. All voices are stilled, finally, as the eternal Word is lodged in the ground. There is a musical whisper and then silence. But all is not gloomy here, musically, even in the grave; there is a change in key at the very end of the *Crucifixus* section (to G Major) which gives the conclusion a sense of confident repose. Indeed, the tension that characterizes all of the earlier repetitions of *crucifixus* (none of the voices ever sing the same syllable at the same time) is finally resolved here; each syllable of *sepultus est* in the last three measures is sung at the same time by all four voices. This is no ordinary burial, bereft of hope. The contrast with the somber beginning of this movement in E minor could not be more striking.

¹¹⁸ See, in general, the exhaustive study of Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry*.

¹¹⁹ I owe much of the musicological analysis here to the helpful advice of Raphael Fusco and Erin Hanke.

Cicero, Illinois

Cicero's influence within and beyond the walls of the classroom was not limited to European territories by any means.¹²⁰ Already in the first half of the sixteenth century, the Franciscan and Jesuit friars who served as missionaries to the Americas brought Latin with them, not only as the language of the Catholic liturgy, but also as a language of instruction. One of Latin's advantages in this regard was the fact that it was still very much a *lingua franca*. It was neither the first tongue of the missionaries themselves nor that of the indigenous peoples in whose land they were now living. So, while the language of the Roman empire and the Roman Catholic church was hardly a neutral vehicle for communication, nonetheless it had the potential to play the same kind of useful role in colonial America that it had for so many centuries in medieval and early modern Europe, helping to bridge numerous and significant cultural, national, and religious divides.

In Mexico in the sixteenth century, the Colegio de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco, which was established by Franciscan missionaries in the 1530s, offered "to the sons of Aztec lords" a rigorous and traditional classical education: "Latin grammar, followed by rhetoric, poetics, logic, philosophy, and even medicine, all taught through the medium of Latin."¹²¹ Classical Latin authors in the school's library included Juvenal, Livy, Plutarch, Sallust, Seneca, Virgil, and, naturally, Cicero.¹²² One of the Franciscans who started the mission declared that after some initial struggles many of his Aztec pupils turned out to be "good grammarians, composing long ... orations (in prose), and hexameter and pentameter verses."¹²³ Successful students were compared favorably with Cicero.¹²⁴ A Castilian priest who had recently arrived in Mexico could not believe that the native American students had learned as much Latin as it was claimed they had. After hearing one boy recite the Lord's Prayer and the Creed in perfect Latin, the priest challenged the accuracy of one word in order to test the student. He responded by asking the priest what case the word was in, and since the priest himself did not fully comprehend Latin grammar, he left "quite at a loss,

120 The subheading refers to a suburb of Chicago, named after Cicero, New York, which was formed as a township in 1790 and assigned the name by a clerk who happened to like the classics. The city's name is chosen as an admittedly playful subheading here to indicate the extent and depth of Cicero's influence, often ignored or taken for granted, in the so-called New World.

121 Ostler, *Ad Infinitum*, 267.

122 Mathes, *Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco*, 32–65.

123 Ostler, *Ad Infinitum*, 269.

124 *Ibid.*, 269.

covered with confusion.”¹²⁵ The first printing press was established in Mexico City in the 1530s,¹²⁶ and when the Jesuits arrived to Mexico they began to publish textbooks for use in their schools.¹²⁷ Cicero was one of the main authors.¹²⁸

Serge Gruzinski suggests that the exercise of finding commonalities in the apparently mutually exclusive categories encountered in the reading of ancient pagan Greco-Roman classics and Christian writings in school made it easier for the first Europeans in Latin America and the native peoples who surrounded them to find common ground between their respective cultures.¹²⁹ Interpretation, not just mindless recitation, was required for teachers and students alike to come to grips with a Latin textbook that might include poems of Ovid written from exile, a hymn of Sedulius, and a poem on good manners at the dinner table.¹³⁰ When it came to interaction with their indigenous neighbors, Catholic missionaries tended to be quite open to the syncretization of native religions with established Christian practices and beliefs.

The impact of the Latin language in general and Cicero in particular was no less consequential upon colonial North America, although it started somewhat later (the early seventeenth century).¹³¹ As Carl Richard points out, the word “grammar,” as used to describe “grammar schools” in the American colonies, “referred to Latin grammar, not English.”¹³² At upper levels of education, Latin

125 Ibid., 269.

126 Laird, “Colonial Spanish America and Brazil,” 527.

127 On the Jesuit Blas Valera who may have authored a history and grammar of the Quechua language in Latin, see Hyland, *Jesuit and Incas*. For a recent example of “Atlantic History,” exploring the impact of Rome and Spain on Peruvian culture, see MacCormack, *On Wings of Time*. On Cicero’s presence in Latin America, see Weil, *2000 Jahre Cicero*, 284–294.

128 On the important role of books in the Spanish conquest of Latin America in the sixteenth century, see Leonard, *Books of the Brave*. For the tradition of funeral orations in Latin in Mexico, see Romero, *Tópicos sobre Cicerón en México*, 161–216.

129 Gruzinski, *Mestizo Mind*, 91. On the limits of syncretism, especially for the Franciscans and Dominicans, see Ricard, *Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*.

130 See my “Ovid, Christianity, and Etiquette,” 145–157.

131 As early as the 1920s, Gilbert Chinard was calling for greater attention to be paid to the role the classics played in the intellectual and moral formation of those “who framed the American institutions” (Chinard, *Literary Bible of Thomas Jefferson*, 4). Chinard observes that “we can hardly realize the power exerted by the classics at a time and in a land where only a few books were available” (as quoted in Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 284). Since then, the study of the classics’ place in the cultural history of the United States of America has taken huge strides forward. In the last 30 years, there has been a veritable outpouring of studies devoted to this new scholarly field.

132 Richard, “Cicero and American Founders,” 124. Middlekauff, *Ancients and Axioms*, 76–77, observes: “Since grammar masters knew that colonial colleges required young scholars to

prose was regularly used by theologians, and lectures were frequently given in Latin. At Harvard and Princeton to this day a commencement address is still delivered in Latin.

Cicero was a mainstay of the curriculum at early American grammar schools, preparing students for eventual study at colleges like Harvard or William and Mary. Many of them would go on to enter the ministry. At schools like Boston Latin School, where Ezekiel Cheever, author of the grammar book, *Accidence: A Short Introduction to the Latin Tongue*, was a master, Cicero's orations, letters, and *De officiis* were among the required texts.¹³³ A knowledge of Greek and Latin was the only admission requirement at Yale and Harvard up to the end of the eighteenth century, and the ability to read or "read into English" (i.e. "translate") Cicero was regarded as essential. In 1642 Harvard's admission requirements included the following statement:

When any schollar is able to read Tully or such like classicall Latine Authore *ex tempore*, & make and speake true Latin in verse and prose, *suo (ut aiunt) Marte*, and decline perfectly the paradigmes of Nounes and Verbes in the Greeke tongue, then may hee bee admitted into the Colledge, nor shall any claim admission before such qualifications.¹³⁴

Once admitted, on the campus itself, students were forbidden to use English. Similar stipulations were in place at William and Mary, Yale, Princeton, and Columbia. It is clear that the requirements were taken fairly seriously; students' knowledge of Latin was put to very real tests. At Yale in 1745, before admission, students were required "Extempore to Read, Construe, and Parse Tully, Virgil, and the Greek Testament: and to write True Latin Prose." In 1755 King's College (Columbia) stipulated that "none shall be admitted ... but such as can read the first three of Tully's Select Orations and the three first books of Virgil's Aeneid into English."¹³⁵ In 1760 John Jay had to translate three of Cicero's speeches when he applied to King's College.¹³⁶ The "Ivy League" schools continued to focus on Latin instruction and Cicero well into the next century. In 1844, the

display their knowledge of Latin and Greek, they exercised their charges in the classics—and little else." See also the same author's "A Persistent Tradition," 54–67, and, in general, Gummere, *American Colonial Mind*.

133 James Madison referred to them as "the common list of School classics." See Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 26.

134 Ostler, *Ad Infinitum*, 285.

135 Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 27.

136 Richard, "Cicero and American Founders," 125. As late as 1816 Brown University required Horace Mann to translate Cicero before admission.

president of Brown University, Barnas Sears, produced a textbook entitled *The Ciceronian: Or, The Prussian Method of Teaching the Elements of the Latin Language, Adapted to the Use of American Schools*.¹³⁷

The value of Cicero's political and philosophical writings for the inculcation of virtues and moral standards in the young was also not neglected. After the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1766, Jonathan Mayhew preached a sermon in which he expressed his gratitude for his initiation "in youth, in the doctrines of civil liberty," as taught by Cicero among others.¹³⁸ As a teacher of moral values, the author of works such as *De officiis* continued to be popular for many generations of Americans, not only at school but also at home. Josiah Quincy, mayor of Boston and president of Harvard, owned three editions of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*. He used these "noble patterns of behavior" as he strove "to inculcate virtue in his family."¹³⁹ Such attitudes toward Cicero continued to be commonly held in the United States throughout the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁰

In her reminiscences of her own education, *Cicero in Maine*, published in 1905, Martha Baker Dunn describes how her teacher, who was "dead stuck on Latin," in response to a question from the class about Cicero, showed the pupils "how his true nobleness overbalanced his political weakness and vanity."¹⁴¹ Dunn herself felt that she had "touched solid ground" when she began the study of Cicero:

We lived in an age when treason and traitors were matters of recent history, and philippics were something we were very familiar with, albeit under a different name. The class lyric, by an easy transition, blossomed into "We'll hang old Cat'line to a sour apple tree," and without a dissenting voice we took the great orator to our homes and hearts. The teacher, when he discerned our enthusiasm and heard the uncouth lad vociferating genially, "he's jest givin' it to the old Cat to-day, ain't he?" heaved a

137 My thanks to Joel Brondos for bringing this to my attention.

138 Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 24.

139 Ibid., 150. For John Marshall's recommendation of *De officiis* for his grandson's reading, see MacKendrick, "This Rich Source of Delight," 103.

140 From Winterer, *Culture of Classicism*, 26, one learns that Joseph Warren clad himself in "a Ciceronian toga" before speaking to a Boston crowd in 1775 that had gathered to commemorate the anniversary of the Boston Massacre. Other studies besides Winterer's which stress the historical relevance of the classics in the United States but with a more polemical bent include: Kopff, *Devil Knows Latin*; Simmons, *Climbing Parnassus*; and Percy, *Grammar of Our Civility*.

141 As quoted in Rolfe, *Cicero*, 162.

sigh, perhaps, over the incomprehensible vagaries of pupils and wisely addressed himself to making the most of the situation.

Dunn describes one Saturday when her instructor brought to class a copy of Rufus Choate's "Eloquence of Revolutionary Periods," a lecture delivered to the Mechanic Apprentices Library Association of Boston in 1857. As Dunn and her classmates listened to the "splendid words" and the "vibrating sentences" about the "genius of Cicero," she says, "our eyes shone and our hearts beat":

From that purer eloquence, from that nobler orator, the great trial of fire and blood through which the spirit of Rome was passing had burned and purged away all things light, all things gross: the purple robe, the superb attitude and action, the splendid commonplaces of a festal rhetoric, are all laid by; the ungraceful, occasional vanity of adulation, the elaborate speech of the abundant, happy mind at its ease, all disappear; and instead, what directness, what plainness, what rapidity, what fire, what abnegation of himself, what disdain, what hate of the usurper and the usurpation, what grand, swelling sentiments, what fine raptures of liberty roll and revel there.¹⁴²

One of Dunn's classmates, who achieved success later in life, credited Cicero and his orations for his own good citizenship: "My own first conscious impulse towards making a good citizen of myself dates from the time when I was awkwardly but enthusiastically translating Cicero's orations in the old brick schoolhouse in my native town."¹⁴³

As a political theorist and revolutionary exemplar, Cicero had a profound influence on John Adams and others who played fundamental roles in establishing the nascent republic.¹⁴⁴ One of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, John Witherspoon, named his home "Tusculum," in honor of Cicero's villa.¹⁴⁵ Alexander Hamilton gave himself the soubriquet "Tully" in his published attacks on supporters of the Whiskey Rebellion. James Wilson, one of the drafters of the Constitution, taught law at the College of Philadelphia (later the University of Pennsylvania) and frequently cited Cicero on natural law. Wilson called *De officiis* "a work which does honour to human understanding

142 Dunn, *Cicero in Maine*, 8–10.

143 As quoted in Rolfe, *Cicero*, 162.

144 Bruno Weil devotes 25 pages of *2000 Jahre Cicero* to Cicero's influence on the American Revolutionaries, especially Thomas Jefferson.

145 It is also the name of a college in Tennessee founded by Presbyterian ministers in 1794.

and the human heart.”¹⁴⁶ Viewed as a martyr for the cause of the Roman republic, Cicero was very much on the minds of the Founding Fathers of the new United States.¹⁴⁷ “Father of his Country,” the epithet assigned to the first American president, George Washington, is a translation of the honorific *Pater patriae*, given to great Roman heroes of state, including Cicero.¹⁴⁸ When they sought inspiration from the ancient Romans, the revolutionary founders of the young American republic favored Cicero (or Cato the younger) over the popular dictator, Caesar or the first emperor, Augustus.¹⁴⁹ Following the selfless precedent set by the famous Roman military dictator, Cincinnatus, Washington deliberately turned down an opportunity to continue serving in the most powerful public position in the young nation and returned after two terms in office to private life instead.¹⁵⁰ “Caesarism” was most certainly not in vogue.

John Adams was particularly taken with Cicero. He wrote to Jefferson after the death of one of America’s harshest critics of the classics, Benjamin Rush: “Classicks, in Spight of our Friend Rush, I must think indispensable.” Adams had written passionately to Rush urging him to desist from his tirades against the classics. Otherwise, he said: “I never will forgive you until you repent, retract, and reform. No, never. It is impossible.”¹⁵¹ In his “Defence of the Constitution of the United States of America,” Adams declared “all the ages of the world have not produced a greater statesman and philosopher united than Cicero.”¹⁵² Adams and others distrusted the kind of direct (and often messy) democracy associated with Athens. Their preference for the Roman model (including Cicero’s embrace “of the three branches of government”) is readily discerned in the Latinate nomenclature still associated with American government (words such as “Republic,” “Capitol,” and “Senate”).¹⁵³

146 See Richard, “Cicero and the American Founders,” 140 and 130.

147 For a longer view on the subject, see Meckler, *Classical Antiquity and the Politics of America*.

148 Fishwick, *Cicero, Classicism and Popular Culture*, 183.

149 America’s first great popular hero, George Washington, was a devotee of Joseph Addison’s neo-classical play *Cato* and modeled himself on its Stoic hero, a staunch advocate for the Republic.

150 See Wills, *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment*.

151 Richard, *Founders and Classics*, 222.

152 As quoted in Merolle, *Mommsen and Cicero*, 87.

153 Adams would read aloud from Cicero’s speeches, enjoying “the sweetness and grandeur” of the language and claiming that “it exercises my lungs, raises my spirits, opens my pores, quickens the circulation and so contributes much to health.” When he heard that his son John Quincy’s curriculum did not include Cicero and Demosthenes, Adams was indignant and told his son to start studying the ancient orators at once on his own. “I absolutely

John Adams's son, John Quincy Adams, is supposed to have spent two hours a day for ten months reading the complete works of Cicero in Latin. Six bronze busts of ancient literary heroes, including Cicero, sitting on the mantelpiece of his house in Quincy, Massachusetts, were referred to as his "household gods."¹⁵⁴ In a Harvard address of 1810, the younger Adams touted Cicero's oratorical achievements and gave this stirring *peroratio*: "Let us make this the standard of moral and intellectual worth, for all human kind; and in reply to all the severities of satire, and the bitterness of misanthropy, repeat with conscious exultation, 'we are of the same species of being, as Cicero.'"¹⁵⁵

Among the early American presidents, Thomas Jefferson was one of the best read in the classics, although he was not particularly fond of the "long, florid speeches" often associated with Cicero's name and preferred instead the "simplicity, brevity, and rationality" of the Attic style.¹⁵⁶ Jefferson knew Greek and Latin well and, like Adams, is supposed to have read *De senectute* often.¹⁵⁷ In a letter regarding the founding of the University of Virginia, he declares of the ancient Greek and Latin languages:

In my last letter of the 18th, I omitted to say anything of the languages as part of our proposed University. It was not that I think, as some do, that they are useless. I am of a very different opinion. I do not think them very essential to the obtaining of eminent degrees of science; but I think them very useful towards it. I suppose there is a portion of life during which our faculties are ripe enough for this, and for nothing more useful. I think the Greeks and Romans have left us the present models which exist of fine composition, whether we examine them as works of reason, or of style and fancy; and to them we probably owe these characteristics of modern composition.¹⁵⁸

That Cicero's rhetorical theory and example may have directly or indirectly influenced presidential oratory has been frequently suggested. Abraham Lincoln knew Caleb Bingham's influential textbook/anthology *Columbian Orator* (first published in 1797) quite well. Bingham's textbook features Cicero as a

insist upon it," he declared. By the end of his life, Adams knew *De senectute* almost by heart (McCullough, *John Adams*, 34, 45, 259, and 629).

154 Friedlaender and Butterfield, *Diary of Charles Francis Adams*, vol. 4, vii.

155 *Cambridge Companion to Cicero*, 337.

156 Richard, "Cicero and the American Founders," 128.

157 Merolle, *Mommsen and Cicero*, 87.

158 Ostler, *Ad Infinitum*, 285.

republican hero and an oratorical exemplar. The brilliant eloquence of Lincoln's speech at Gettysburg and the ringing cadences of his second inaugural address were not, therefore, purely the product of his native rearing in the American Midwest. It is true that his "Gettysburg Address" was not nearly as long or elaborate as that of Edward Everett, the first (and often forgotten) speaker at the commemorative event held in November of 1863 at the site of the bloody battle at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Everett had far more formal training in classical rhetoric than Lincoln.¹⁵⁹ He spoke for two hours at the Gettysburg event but later himself acknowledged that his formal oration, complete with *narratio* and *exordium*, was far less effectual than Lincoln's simple speech. Brief as it is, Lincoln's speech is memorable at least in part because of its skillful use (not overuse) of rhetorical ornament. The phrase: "government of the people, by the people, for the people," for instance, is a tricolon that combines the figures of epiphora, asyndeton, and polyptoton.¹⁶⁰

More recently, President Barack Obama has been called "the American Cicero."¹⁶¹ In his speeches, he uses tricola, anaphora, and epiphora freely. Like Cicero and Lincoln, Obama is not from a long established political family (he is a *novus homo*, if you will) and was trained as a lawyer. He, too, seems to be exceptionally open to introspection and "self-fashioning," and like Cicero, Obama has been supremely interested in linking rhetoric with civic idealism.¹⁶²

The study of the classics evolved into an academic discipline in America in the middle of the nineteenth century. Influenced by the German model of *Forschung* in vogue at research universities in Berlin and elsewhere, the idea that teachers of Greek and Latin at the university level should do scientific research as well as teach courses in the languages began to be more and more widely accepted in America. Advanced degrees began to be offered in this field of study.¹⁶³ One of the most important proponents of these new developments

159 Everett attended Boston Latin School, went to Harvard, where he was eventually to become a professor and president, and had a distinguished political career as a governor, senator, and secretary of state.

160 See Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*.

161 See the discussion by Charlotte Higgins in *The Guardian* (November 25, 2008).

162 See Dugan, *Making a New Man*, and Connolly, *State of Speech*. Luther was not so very different in this regard. On his willingness and extraordinary ability to "exploit his fame" on behalf of his Reformation movement, see Pettegree, *Brand Luther*.

163 Turner, *Philology*, 277–278, suggests that with Latin and Greek no longer required for admission to universities like Harvard (discontinued in 1866–7), erstwhile professors of Greek and Latin began to teach the classics "as a field, not general education," because they needed to have students in their courses. So this pedagogical shift in America may

was Basil Lannau Gildersleeve, who had earned his PhD at Göttingen.¹⁶⁴ One of the first classicists to receive his PhD in America (Johns Hopkins) was Ernst Gottlieb Sihler, who had studied at Berlin (starting in 1872) with Ernst Curtius, Johann Gustav Droysen, and Theodor Mommsen, among other academic luminaries (he later continued his studies at Leipzig). In Gildersleeve's *Seminarium* at Johns Hopkins it became clear that Sihler's research would not be confined to pure philology, "mere verbal criticism," but that he would also consider the ancient world and its literary products in their cultural context.¹⁶⁵ Sihler went on to have a distinguished career as a classicist at New York University. He mounted a lively defense of Cicero against the attacks of his former teacher, Mommsen, about whom more in the next chapter.¹⁶⁶

Sihler merits our attention here because he was the product of a distinctive nineteenth-century Lutheran classical schooling in America. His father, Wilhelm Sihler, had received his doctorate at Berlin before emigrating to serve German Lutherans in North America as a missionary. He helped to establish a seminary at Fort Wayne, Indiana, and was its first president. Wilhelm Sihler is regarded as one of the founding fathers of the "Missouri Synod" and served as its first vice-president. When Ernst Sihler was ten he entered "Concordia Gymnasium" in Fort Wayne as a *Sextaner* and began the study of Latin. One of his instructors, Robert Engel, spoke Latin in class, albeit with a Saxon accent. Sihler notes approvingly of his American "praeceptors in the classics" that

owe less to the idealistic vision of an academic field that would embrace all of *Altertumswissenschaft* (not just philology) than to practical necessity.

- 164 Gildersleeve was the son of a Presbyterian evangelist and a regular churchgoer throughout his life. He is supposed to have translated sermons into Greek as a technique to stay awake while listening to them. He was the first editor of the *American Journal of Philology*. Gildersleeve's *Latin Grammar* (with Gonzalez Lodge) is still in print. He also produced creditable editions of Pindar and Persius as well as of the Christian apologist, Justin Martyr.
- 165 In the 1860s in America, it was unnecessary to specify to which languages the word "philological" in the title of "The American Philological Association" referred, because at that time very few "studied" languages other than Greek or Latin. One read French novels but did not make them the object of scholarly investigation. The name of the society has only been altered in recent times (now "The Society for Classical Studies"), although philology proper had long ago ceased to be the only or even the primary field of study for many American classicists.
- 166 Sihler suggests (*Cicero of Arpinum*, 369) that it "is not quite easy to do justice to the intensity, the energy and the versatility of Cicero's nature. It is on the other hand consummately easy to copy and echo, and by a doubtful, a vicarious scholarship to appropriate the slurs and sneers of Mommsen and Drumann and the minor minds who have trodden in their footsteps."

they “were scholarly men, not half-baked products of the crude educational beginnings of the West.” Sihler assures his readers that his teachers “had been trained at German gymnasia and subsequently studied at German universities such as Berlin, Göttingen, Leipzig, Erlangen.” The textbooks used for Sihler’s instruction “almost all were published by Weidmann of Berlin or by Teubner of Leipzig; and the instruction in the classics was rigorously exact to a fault.” After a *Tirocinium*, the pupils read “Nepos, Caesar, Livy, Cicero, and Horace” and did “Latin exercises every week both written and oral.”¹⁶⁷

Sihler’s was not the only school modeled after the German *Gymnasium* that had sprung up in nineteenth-century north America, but it is one of the best known. Immigrants from Germany of the nineteenth century, many of whom settled in the upper Midwest, had a very different view toward cultural assimilation than earlier Lutheran immigrants in eastern states such as New York and Pennsylvania; they tended to hold on much more tenaciously to their European identities. German-language newspapers were widely read in cities like St. Louis and Milwaukee. These German-Americans brewed beer, established many a *Kindergarten*, celebrated Christmas, set up gymnastic clubs (*Turnerverein*), named towns after Hermann (Arminius), the German warrior who helped defeat the armies of Augustus at the *Teutoburger Wald*, and erected statues in his honor. Some of them were also “Old Lutherans,” that is to say, Lutherans committed to heeding the calls of Claus Harms and others to return to the theological roots of the Lutheran Reformation, including the confessional writings assembled in “The Book of Concord.”¹⁶⁸ These German settlers, some of whom left Europe under considerable pressure and hoped to find freedom in America, as other religious immigrants before them had, fervently wished to practice their faith and to teach their children without government interference. To that end, they established distinctive parochial schools and institutions of higher learning, including some based on the German *Gymnasium* model. Latin was often a mainstay of the curriculum. “Concordia” was a popular name for such institutions, harking back to “The Formula of Concord.”¹⁶⁹

One of the largest group emigrations of such German Lutherans to America left Bremerhaven in November of 1838. After a tumultuous sea voyage, they settled *en masse* in Missouri, south of St. Louis, near the Mississippi River, in Perry

167 Sihler, *From Maumee to Thames and Tiber*, 29–34.

168 Harms published a new set of 95 Theses in 1817, on the three hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, attacking “reason” as the new Pope.

169 “Augustana” and “Augsburg” (references to the “Augsburg Confession” of 1530) were also popular names, but they were more often associated with Swedish Lutheran churches and schools in the Midwest than German Lutheran institutions.

County. Thomas Korcok argues that the emigration from Saxony was prompted in large part by concern about educational issues (e.g., rationalism in the classroom), as much as it was a matter of freedom of worship (at issue in Prussia).¹⁷⁰ It is not surprising, therefore, that very soon after the Saxons' arrival, the *Anzeiger des Westens*, a German newspaper in St. Louis ran the following advertisement:

We, the undersigned, intend to establish an institution of instruction and education, which distinguishes itself from ordinary elementary schools especially by this, that it comprises, besides the ordinary branches, all Gymnasium branches necessary to a true Christian and scientific education, such as: Religion, the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, German, French, and English languages, History, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Natural History, Elementary Philosophy, Music, Drawing.... The settlement of the German Lutherans in Perry Co. near Obrero, Aug. 13, 1839.¹⁷¹

Even though the school building itself was nothing but a tiny log cabin, its curriculum was ambitious. Studies included ancient Greek (not just the New Testament, but Xenophon and Plutarch) and classical Latin "with an emphasis on Cicero."¹⁷² In 1849 the school moved to St. Louis, and in 1861 it was transferred to Fort Wayne, where, as we have seen, Ernst Sihler attended the school. As Korcok observes, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, the dynamic leader of the Saxon immigrants after the banishment of Martin Stephan, along with "his fellow German-American educationalists believed that a classical form of Lutheran education that included Latin, Greek, Hebrew, logic, and the rhetorical arts was essential for pastors and teachers."¹⁷³ This was quite a distinctive educational position to take in the American Midwest in the middle of the nineteenth century. By contrast, at this same time, "the average American Methodist minister had achieved only an elementary level of education."¹⁷⁴

Walther, who served as president of the Synod and also of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, continued to use Latin in the classroom for his *Repetitorium* in dogmatics at the Seminary, as did his successor, Franz Pieper.¹⁷⁵ Seminary

¹⁷⁰ Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 140.

¹⁷¹ Thomas, "A Bethlehem Built by Poverty," 25.

¹⁷² Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 175.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 177.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁷⁵ The textbook was Johann Wilhelm Baier's *Compendium theologiae positivae* (Sihler, *From Maumee*, 45). By 1922, lectures at the Seminary were no longer being delivered in Latin (Mezger, *Denkstein*, 222).

students were quizzed in Latin in class and for their final examinations were required to translate a chapter of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Latin.¹⁷⁶ Conversations in some classes were also carried out in Latin.¹⁷⁷ At the dedication of the Seminary in St. Louis in 1850 Walther gave the address in Latin, and Martin Luther's German chorale *Ein' feste Burg* was sung in Latin translation (*Turris Deus fortissima*).¹⁷⁸

The Missouri Synod was not the only Lutheran body in the Midwest to promote the study of Latin and Cicero. Cicero's influence permeates one of the most prominent books on homiletics written in the United States, the product of the prolific pen of an Iowa Synod theologian: Johann Michael Reu. His *Homiletics: A Manual of the Theory and Practice of Preaching* includes some 20 references to Cicero, more than to such preaching luminaries as Chrysostom or even Lutheran homiletics like Melancthon. Educated at the *Missionsgesellschaft* established by Wilhelm Löhe in Neuendettelsau in Bavaria, Reu came to America as a young man and eventually became a professor at Wartburg Theological Seminary (Dubuque, Iowa).¹⁷⁹ His textbook on homiletics supplied a real need in America. As Reu observes: "Apart from an elementary sketch by the late Dr. J. Fry, the Lutheran Church in America has produced no Homiletics, either in the English, German or Scandinavian tongue."¹⁸⁰

As he discusses how important it is for preachers preparing sermons to consider not only what they are going to say but how they plan to say it, Reu cites approvingly Cicero, *De oratore*, 2.27.120.¹⁸¹ Rhetorical considerations need to be taken seriously, especially by confessionally minded Lutheran preachers. The issue of preserving the pure substance of their Lutheran beliefs, *die reine Lehre*, was so critical that it might be easy for them to overlook the importance of figuring out how best to use words to impress the truth of Lutheran doctrine upon the minds—and hearts—of their listeners. Reu cites Fénelon's approval of Cicero's insistence on never separating "philosophy from eloquence." Sermons must not only speak to the intellect but also rouse the feelings, "either

176 Strømme, *Halvor*, 224.

177 Manteufel, "Seminary Life in Walther's Day," 64.

178 In 1883 at the dedication of the new Seminary building one of the services was conducted in Latin, and Georg Stöckhardt gave a Latin oration. Again *Turris Deus fortissima* was sung (Kretzmann, "Development of Higher Education," 235–236).

179 Reu was quite broadly read not only in ancient but also in modern literature. He suggests, for instance, that the "polyphonic prose" of the contemporary poet Amy Lowell is "an interesting analogy to the rhymed prose" of ancient authors such as Apuleius and Augustine (*Homiletics*, 189).

180 Reu, *Homiletics*, v.

181 *Ibid.*, 30.

by exhortation, or the commemoration of some illustrious action, or by moving the people to hope, or to fear, or to ambition, or desire of glory; and often also to dissuade them from temerity, from rage, from ardent expectation, from injustice, from envy, from cruelty."¹⁸²

In support of the definition of the Swiss theologian Alexandre Vinet that "movement is the royal virtue of style," Reu offers the following observation attributed to Cicero: *eloquentia nihil est nisi motus animae continuus*.¹⁸³ A sermon must never "rest idly at any given point." Better to abandon "all interruptions and digressions" or keep them to a minimum lest they detract from "continuous movement," as the preacher patiently but persistently takes listeners along with him to the appointed rhetorical destination.¹⁸⁴

Far from discouraging the use of ornament in preaching, Reu stresses the importance of "finding apt figures and images to present most vividly the truth and grace, the omnipotence and holiness of God." He cites Cicero (*De orat.* 3.52.200) when he points out the necessity in "the intellectual contest of speech" not only for "keen weapons" that are able to "pierce" opponents' defenses but also for pleasing grace: "the fencer and the gladiator discipline themselves not only to give and parry blows with dexterity, but to move with grace, *cum venustate*."¹⁸⁵ Preachers should not fail to introduce into their sermons "this element of grace and beauty," and teachers of homiletics should certainly not seek to bar its use. Cicero, Reu observes, "emphasized the close connection between the beautiful and the useful and illustrated this connection from nature."¹⁸⁶

On prose rhythm, Reu cites Eduard Norden's monumental work *Die antike Kunstprosa* and suggests that "what made Luther's German so musical was his marked sense of rhythm," as evidenced, for instance, in his explanation of the Second Article.¹⁸⁷ In this connection he cites Cicero's advice that after two or three of the same metrical feet, "some other foot should be introduced, in order that the speaker might not fall into a disagreeable mimicry of metre" (see *De orat.* 3.47.182). Reu also notes Cicero's fondness for the double trochee (a long syllable followed by a short syllable, repeated) at the end of a

¹⁸² Reu (*Homiletics*, 171) cites *De oratore* 2.82.337.

¹⁸³ I am unable to find this quotation in Cicero. Perhaps Reu has a line from the opening paragraph of Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venedig* (first published in 1912) in mind: "the *motus animi continuus* which according to Cicero is the essence of eloquence."

¹⁸⁴ Reu, *Homiletics*, 176.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 183–184.

¹⁸⁶ *De orat.* 3.45–6; 179–80; Reu, *Homiletics*, 223.

¹⁸⁷ Reu, *Homiletics*, 190–191.

period, as in the last word of the phrase: *Patris dictum sapiens temeritas filii comprobavit*.¹⁸⁸

Reu cites John Albert Broadus, the chaplain to Robert E. Lee's army during the Civil War and President of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, on the difference between diffuseness and profuseness: "The former spreads sluggishly over a wide expanse, the latter pours onward in a rushing torrent. Longinus compares the impassioned style of Demosthenes to a storm or a thunderbolt, that of Cicero to a conflagration, wide-spreading, all-devouring, long-continuing."¹⁸⁹ That the preacher should read "the best literature" to enrich vocabulary and fullness of expression, and above all form "literary taste," is of paramount importance to Broadus (and Reu): "To bathe our minds in choice literature till they become imbued with correct principles of style, to nourish them with good learning till our taste grows healthy, so as to discern quickly and surely between good and bad, is a process surpassingly profitable in its results, and in itself delightful."¹⁹⁰ Reu cites approvingly W.T. Brewster's *Writing English Prose* on the value of training a young student in "rewording foreign ideas" before he is "turned loose on ideas of his own":

Nothing could be more valuable in this connection than to work through some of the classics in the Loeb Classical Library with the Latin or Greek text and the English translation on opposite pages: e.g., Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, with Winstedt's fine idiomatic English translation.

Reu cautions somewhat prophetically: "This formative value of Greek and Latin for the student of English may well give those pause who favor the curtailment or abandonment of the classics in education."¹⁹¹

Reu is especially concerned with the common practice of announcing the *divisio* of a sermon into parts to one's audience in advance and agrees with the cautionary words of the English Baptist preacher, Robert Hall:

Let an oration of Cicero or Demosthenes be stretched upon a Procrustes' bed of this sort, and if I am not greatly mistaken, the flame and enthusiasm which have excited admiration in all ages, will instantly evaporate; yet no one perceives the want of method in these immortal

188 Ibid., 190.

189 Ibid., 216.

190 Reu, *Homiletics*, 238. See Cicero's defense of the study of literature in *Pro Archia*.

191 Reu, *Homiletics*, 241; Brewster, *Writing English Prose*, 239–240.

compositions, nor can anything be conceived more remote from incoherent rhapsody.¹⁹²

Even though Cicero declares (*De inventione* 1.22.31) that "the partition, rightly presented, makes the whole discourse luminous and clear," he also recognized that it is often best "to conceal the order we follow, till we lead the hearer to it without his being aware of it before."¹⁹³ Reu notes that despite the warnings of Fénelon and others, "practically all French, German, Scandinavian, English, and American preachers, and since 1850 the great majority of them, adhered to the announced disposition."¹⁹⁴

While Luther and Calvin "often dispensed with the introduction" to their sermons, especially expository ones, Cicero insisted on the value of graceful and gradual (rather than abrupt and violent) beginnings to discourse: "There is no cause in the compass of nature which pours itself into effect all at once, and suddenly vanishes; in like manner, nature has disguised under gentle beginnings the progress of more violent commotions."¹⁹⁵ Of the introduction to the sermon, Reu observes that "it must be remembered that even if the preacher is greatly excited at the outset, the audience usually are not, and he had better restrain himself, so as not to get beyond the range of their sympathies. When Cicero broke out with his opening words against Catiline, the Senate was already much excited."¹⁹⁶

Finally, as to the vexed question of whether sermons should be written in advance and memorized before delivery, or whether they should be delivered on the basis of an outline or notes, or preached entirely *ex corde*, responding to a biblical text, Reu observes that Cicero would sometimes read his speeches from a manuscript, as he did in the case of his speech delivered to the Senate in 57 BC, *Post reditum in senatu*.¹⁹⁷

While generalizations in this regard are dangerous, one suspects that whether directly influenced by Reu or not, many Lutheran sermons preached over the years in Midwestern American churches have more resembled a Ciceronian oration, carefully prepared and delivered (complete with *captatio benevolentiae* and *peroratio*) and adorned with figures of speech and thought,

192 Reu, *Homiletics*, 466–467.

193 *Ibid.*, 477.

194 *Ibid.*, 478.

195 *De oratore* 2.78.317: Reu, *Homiletics*, 490.

196 Reu, *Homiletics*, 493.

197 *Ibid.*, 515.

than they have a plain homily (informal, less studied, almost conversational in tone). The former is primarily a literary exercise, a reading really, even if memorized and spoken, while the latter is more of an oral performance, a living, spontaneous speech activity.¹⁹⁸

198 It may also be worth noting that the practice of spontaneous prayer, common in other American Protestant settings, never really caught on in many Lutheran churches or homes, where the standardized prayers regularly included in Luther's *Small Catechism*, his morning and evening prayers as well as prayers to be said before and after meals, were memorized and prayed verbatim.

Lutheranism and Anti-Ciceronianism

Despite all the glowing accolades received by Cicero from Renaissance and Reformation humanists (including Luther), the criticisms of his style that had been expressed already in antiquity continued apace in the early modern period. By the end of the sixteenth century, a strong anti-Ciceronian movement was well underway. In the nineteenth century, thanks to the Romantics, German philhellenists, and Theodor Mommsen, Cicero's personal reputation sank lower than ever before. The Italian word *Cicerone* is used today to describe a talkative guide, not a philosopher or statesman.¹ Directly and indirectly, in his own lifetime, and thereafter through the considerable influence he continued to exert on his religious followers and admirers, Martin Luther must surely have helped to contribute to the depreciation of Cicero's value to the cultural tradition of Europe and America.

There is almost as much that is negative as there is positive that can be discerned in what Luther has to say about Cicero and his Latinity. Indeed, the Reformation he helped to inaugurate has long been (not without reason) associated with the ultimate demise of the Latin language, not the resurgence of Cicero or Latin prose. Erasmus went so far as to complain that "Lutheranism" had ruined literature (CWE 14,129). His charge has been reiterated often since, and there is at least a germ of truth in the accusation.²

In this final chapter we retrace our steps, returning to the early modern period, as we explore the nature and extent of Luther's anti-Ciceronianism and its possible influence on subsequent generations, paying special attention to the role his disciple Matthias Flacius may have played in this connection and taking a close look at the Latinity of one of the best known Lutheran exegetes of the seventeenth century, Johann Albrecht Bengel. How shall we reconcile Luther's indifference or even hostility to Cicero with the highly favorable estimations of the Roman rhetor he so frequently expressed? How influential were Luther's negative views? Did they affect anti-Ciceronian tendencies of the later sixteenth century? Does the impact of Luther's negative views on Cicero

1 First documented, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2nd ed., vol. 3, 212), in Joseph Addison's *Dialogue on Medals* of 1726.

2 Markos, *From Achilles to Christ*, 11, claims without a great deal of elaboration or evidence that "much Christian (especially evangelical) suspicion surrounding the study of the Greeks and Romans can be traced back to the father of Reformed theology: Martin Luther."

extend, at least indirectly, as far as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and even the present, not only in Europe but also in the United States? These are questions that will be raised, if not always answered, in this last chapter.

The Vernacular Reformation

Not all reformers by any means were as enthusiastic in their endorsement of the Latin language as Luther and Melanchthon. Already in the late medieval and early modern periods a groundswell of sentiment against Latin had arisen, especially among followers of reforming movements such as the Lollards. Vernacular languages had a special appeal to many of the reformers because they could be used for religious communication with the common people. During the sixteenth century, popular instructional materials written in the vernacular began to appear with greater and greater frequency. If the reformers had restricted themselves to Latin, it is most unlikely that the Reformation would have had anything like the impact that it did. For instance, Argula von Grumbach (a Bavarian noblewoman), who knew no Latin, became an ardent supporter of the Reformation, but only after she had become familiar with German translations of the works of Luther.³

It would be hard to overestimate the importance of the printing revolution in this regard. Beginning in the middle of the fifteenth century, the printing press had convincingly demonstrated its ability to facilitate the dissemination of texts that would normally have circulated much more slowly and less widely. Theological tracts which would formerly have been written exclusively in Latin were now beginning to be written in (or translated into) the vernacular. When produced in printed editions rather than in the traditional manuscript format, writings such as Luther's theological treatises in the German language were instrumental in fanning the flames of the Reformation movements.⁴

Also critical for the eventual undermining of the venerable *lingua franca* of Europe was the role played by Luther's German Bible. There had been a series of attempts to translate the Bible into German and other vernacular tongues before Luther's, but his was one of the most influential. It was intended to speak not only to the well educated but also to "the mother in the house, the

3 See Matheson, *Argula von Grumbach*.

4 On the central role of the printing press for the progress of the Reformation, see Eisenstein, *Printing Press as Agent of Change*. But see also the thoughtful qualifications of Grafton, "Importance of Being Printed," 265–286.

children on the streets, the ordinary man in the market.”⁵ And it very quickly became a “best-seller” in German-speaking lands.

The traditional order of service was also rendered into the vernacular, thanks to the Reformation. With few exceptions, Latin played a considerably diminished role in Protestant churches, which quickly grew accustomed to using works such as Thomas Cranmer’s *Book of Common Prayer* or the Swedish service book of Olaus Petri to guide their worship.⁶ Preaching in Reformation lands was done almost exclusively in the vernacular. Given the sermon’s importance as the centerpiece of the divine service and as a prime medium for oral communication with the common people, this development is not surprising, nor without much earlier precedent. As early as 813, the Council of Tours had decreed that the vernacular, a precursor of modern French (*lingua romana rustica*), rather than traditional Latin, was the best language in which to preach sermons.⁷

Latin began now often to be identified closely with Catholicism. For one thing, the Mass continued to be said in Latin in Catholic lands; for another, the Vulgate continued to serve as the official version of the Bible for Roman Catholics.⁸ As late as 1643 in Cambridge, Puritan soldiers prevented a sermon from being preached in Latin solely on the grounds that it was the language of Roman Catholicism.⁹ No doubt emerging nationalism played a role here, as increasingly powerful and centralized states like France and England became more interested in emphasizing their own particular, national languages as opposed to a common European standard. In 1539 the French monarchy decreed that French would be the official language—at the expense, naturally, of

5 WA 30.2,637. While Luther did often make the most diligent efforts to go *ad fontes* and to work with others more linguistically expert in Hebrew and Greek than himself, to find out exactly what the *verbum proprium* should be, his attitude towards his translation project was not entirely scholarly. He was determined to make sure that the words and expressions he chose would resonate with ordinary people. The Bible was not merely another ancient text to be examined philologically for Luther, but the living word of God with which he had the most personal and intimate relationship imaginable. Of his favorite epistle, Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, Luther once declared that it was his bosom companion, “my Kate von Bora” (WATR 1,69).

6 On the long-lived popularity and enduring influence of Cranmer’s literary creation, see Jacobs, *Book of Common Prayer*.

7 Leonhardt, *Latin*, 126.

8 Pope Paul IV banned the printing, reading, and possession of the Bible in the vernacular (Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 228).

9 Waquet, *Latin*, 78.

Latin.¹⁰ In his treatise *Excellence de la langue française* of 1683, François Charpentier argued that “to admire the Greeks and Romans would keep the French from cultivating their own tongue.”¹¹

That the Council of Trent rejected the idea of using the vernacular languages for the liturgy or authorized versions of the Bible, thereby solidifying Latin’s secure position in Catholic countries throughout the world, does not necessarily mean that the language of the church’s liturgy or the Vulgate was any better understood by Catholic parishioners after the Council than it was before. Misunderstandings in Italian such as the emergence of “a mysterious lady called Donna Bisodia” from *Da nobis hodie*, or the interpretation of *Kyrie eleison* as *Kirri eleiz’ so* (“there are heaps of carts”) in Bretonian French, testify to the extent to which Latin (and Greek) continued to provide an air of mystery that was missing in the more quotidian vernaculars. As Waquet notes, it is quite likely that for many Catholics the Latin language itself “functioned in the same way as magical incantations.” It was “heard as pure sounds” and considered “efficacious” precisely because it was not understandable. In these contexts, “unintelligibility made sense.”¹² Nor were all Catholic educators, for that matter, as enthusiastic about Cicero and classical Latin as the Jesuits. The Jansenists, for instance, followers of the Dutch theologian Cornelius Jansen, placed less emphasis on Latin as a basic language of instruction.¹³

Many of the more radical reformers (in contradistinction to the “magisterial” reformers) vigorously opposed the study of classical Latin on the grounds that it was incompatible with the simple language of Scripture used by Jesus and his followers, some of whom were uneducated fishermen. Despite his doctorate, Karlstadt was much less impressed than his colleagues at the University of Wittenberg by classical learning in general and was eager to see its use discontinued. He accused the Lutheran humanists of using “worldly-wise” language that was “courtly” and “cosmetic.”¹⁴ He insisted that Lutheran pastors needed no more academic preparation than the simple literacy that would enable them to read the Bible. His “anti-academic bent” did not prevail in the end, at least in Wittenberg,¹⁵ and Karlstadt eventually resigned his professorial position at the University.¹⁶ The more radical reform movements associated with individuals

10 Leonhardt, *Latin*, 163.

11 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 275.

12 Waquet, *Latin*, 104–108.

13 Bowen, *History of Western Education*, vol. 3, 113.

14 Pater, *Karlstadt as the Father of Baptist Movement*, 65.

15 Haran, *Martin Luther*, 177.

16 LW 26,47. See Kähler, “Karlstadts Protest,” 299–312.

like Thomas Müntzer (a onetime student at Wittenberg), Menno Simons, and Kaspar Schwenckfeld, or entire groups such as the Anabaptists, employed the vernacular languages on a much more regular basis than the magisterial reformers. Müntzer was very critical of the Wittenberg embrace of humanism, accusing Luther and his colleagues of trying to intimidate “poor peasants” with their love of letters.¹⁷ The Strasbourg reformer Martin Bucer pointed out to his congregation that even though they lacked knowledge of Latin, they were not that different in that respect from Jesus himself, who was an uneducated carpenter.¹⁸

By the middle of the sixteenth century and continuing into the seventeenth, there had developed a backlash of sorts against the emphasis on Latin and Cicero in schools such as those of Sturm. Wolfgang Ratichius, an influential pedagogue and founder of a school for boys and girls at Köthen, for example, insisted that only *die Muttersprache* was to be used in the first grades.¹⁹ The value of the liberal arts in general became an area of contestation. Christoph Cellarius, professor of eloquence at the University of Halle, expressed concerns that his students were only interested in their specific areas of study and nothing else. Students preparing for legal professions complained about having to learn anything outside of their immediate area of specialization; *Ius ius et nihil plus!* was their cry.²⁰

The insistence of Sturm and others on the value of spoken Latin also came under attack from Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas, a professor of rhetoric at the University of Salamanca. In his *Minerva, seu de causis linguae Latinae* (1587), he argued that undue emphasis on the speaking of Latin in instruction would actually mean the ruination of pure Latinity. It was far better for Latin, from his perspective, to teach students simply to read and write the ancient language: *Qui Latine garriunt, corrumpunt ipsam Latinitatem*.²¹ If not immediately, such views eventually carried the day. Grammar instruction which heretofore had always been based on the Latin language and taught in Latin, began to be given in German. Beginning in 1707, the *Hallesche Grammatik* of Joachim Lange (written in German) was used to teach Latin in the schools established by August Hermann Francke, professor at the University of Halle and an influential Lutheran (pietist) pastor.²²

17 Goertz, *Thomas Müntzer*, 143.

18 Matheson, *Rhetoric of the Reformation*, 35–36.

19 But for a countervailing view from the influential pedagogue, Johannes Amos Comenius, see Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 245.

20 Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 244.

21 *Ibid.*, 247.

22 *Ibid.*, 245.

“One Word of Paul’s Likely Has Three Ciceronian Orations in It”

No recounting of Cicero’s influence on the Lutheran Reformation or, conversely, the Reformation’s impact on Cicero’s reputation could be regarded as full if it did not take into consideration not only Ciceronianism but its fascinating counterpart, anti-Ciceronianism. Likewise, no evaluation of Luther’s estimation of Cicero would be complete that did not acknowledge and try to account for his negative views of the Roman rhetor. It may tell us something about the unique capacity of Luther’s mind to embrace the paradoxical that he was able to retain, with no apparent sense of inconsistency, such dramatically opposing views of Cicero and what he represented.

At the same time as he referred to Cicero as the “best philosopher” and “the wisest man,” Luther was by no means uncritical of Cicero’s wisdom. The proof of wisdom, after all, lies at least in part in its ultimate efficacy, and Cicero, like Demosthenes before him, was unable in the end to implement his ideas for how the state he served should be governed. Philip of Macedon and his son Alexander eventually overcame the resistance of Athenian patriots; after Cicero’s death, Octavian and Mark Antony were able to defeat the forces of Cassius and Brutus in 42 BC, two years after they and others in the Senate had conspired successfully to assassinate Julius Caesar. In this respect, Luther concludes, even though Cicero may have had the “wisest and most honorable reasons” for pursuing the political course he did, he was “wrong” in the end (WA 40.3, 242). There are limits to human wisdom and what it can achieve. By itself wisdom cannot prevail over sheer power in the world. For all of his lofty thinking, Cicero did not accomplish nearly as much as military men like Marius and Antony did, for better or worse, with their bold actions (WA 20.49). The pen is not always mightier than the sword, however much Cicero (and Luther) may have wished that it were.

And certainly Cicero’s much vaunted wisdom was not enough to enable him to save himself when he ran into danger at the end of his life (WA 40.3, 382-3). Like Julius Caesar, Cicero could not manage finally to maintain even his own personal security. Augustus, by contrast, was more careful about how he proceeded with decisions that might effect his own safety, managing, unlike many of his contemporaries, to die of natural causes after a relatively long life (WA 25.475). But even if Cicero had lived a just life it would not have made any difference in the end for him or for Rome, since a devotion to the pursuit of justice is not necessarily the most effective way to maintain “imperial power,” according to Luther. In politically uncertain circumstances like those of late republican Rome, just men are easily overpowered by the unjust; “otherwise, Cicero would not have been laid low” (WA 40.3, 392).

Human wisdom can not only be ineffectual, according to Luther, but can also end up causing more harm than good. A powerful, enduring idea presented by the wisest of men like Cicero can actually create more problems for the state in the long run than the rash actions undertaken by military men, who often have more limited and personal agendas that are in place only as long as they are in power (WA 20,48). The Roman republic was overturned, according to Luther, not only by Caesar but also by Cicero and Pompey, all of them men who were counted among Rome's wisest, who "believed that they were giving the best advice" for the betterment of the Roman state (WA 25,298).

The same principle holds true in the church as in the world: the wisdom of single individuals can actually cause "many evils." After all, some of the worst heretics were highly intelligent. In this connection, Luther quotes a common saying: "Learned people create heresy."²³ Just as philosophers like Cicero, Plato, and Socrates have been counted as some of the "greatest men" the world has ever known, so too in the church it is often the case that popes and cardinals are considered to be "very wise," but even though they may be thought to represent the church, they are no more the church than Socrates and Plato were Athens or Cicero Rome (WA 43,173). Indeed, these great, wise men are the ones most likely to bring about the ruin of the very institutions they strive to improve with their wisdom.

Although Luther could portray Cicero as a selfless, patriotic hero of Rome, he also suggests more than once that he was not entirely altruistic. What motivated Cicero and other great men of the Roman republic, at bottom, was their own individual quest for glory. Unlike the contrite spirit of humility that is supposed to animate the Christian life, desire for personal glory is what one sees in the pages of pagan writers like Cicero and Virgil (WATR 4,672). Despite what Cicero and other Roman elites may have said in public about their complete dedication to the commonweal, they were interested in far more than simply carrying out their public assignments well:

We are, therefore, thanks to sin, simply opposed to God, so that we do not think about him correctly at all, but rather regard him simply as an idol. If you consider the accomplishments of Cicero and other great men in the Republic, they used their talents exceptionally well, but if you scrutinize

23 WA 31.2,379: *Die gelerten machen keczerey*. The note in WA suggests that the proverb to which Luther alludes here cannot be found. It is most likely a variation on the popular saying: *Je mehr gelehrt, je mehr verkehrt*, or *Je gelehrter, je verkehrter*, or *Die gelerten, die verkerten*, etc. (Wander, *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon*, vol. 1, 1532–4).

their minds, you will see that they were motivated by nothing other than the desire for glory.²⁴

Cicero may have paid lip service to the idea that the Roman *imperium* was established by the “immortal gods,” but in fact he and other great Romans were busy making themselves into gods, whether they admitted it or not. Of the infamous line penned by Cicero: *O fortunatam natam me consule Roman*, Luther asks (WA 40.3,250-1): “Was this not the most arrogant thing to say and most worthy of criticism?” Cicero was more ambitious than Demosthenes, according to Luther, perhaps because he lived and worked in a larger and more powerful state and had greater scope for his talents and energies than the Athenian rhetor (WA 40.3,380). Luther imagines Cicero (and Caesar and Brutus, too) answering the question of who should undertake the plans to govern Rome well. Their egocentric reply: “I, Cicero” (or “I, Brutus,” or “I, Caesar”). How should this governance be accomplished? “With *my* wisdom, with *my* power” (*Mea sapientia, mea potentia*).²⁵

Even though he was a man of words and not known for his military prowess, Cicero was as fixed in his ways and as sure of himself as any successful commander of troops to be found among his contemporaries: “Cicero did not want to yield, any more than Pompey or Caesar did” (WA 40.2,126). It is just as well that his plans to preserve the Republic failed. If Cicero had succeeded in accomplishing everything he wanted to, he would have had a hard time not becoming tyrannical like Julius Caesar, “because where there is great success, tyranny is never far off” (WA 40.3,217).

Despite his oft repeated, hyperbolic praise of Cicero’s wisdom, Luther did not actually believe that Cicero was perfectly wise. The ancient Roman’s wisdom was partial wisdom. Like Plato, Cicero had “a little whiff” of grace and mercy and eternal life, but it was not certain knowledge (WA 49,217). What made Cicero’s wisdom incomplete in Luther’s eyes? Just like Socrates and other philosophers, Cicero failed to reckon with the fundamental fact which Scripture teaches so clearly: sinful human beings are children of wrath. And the wiser one is, the more prone one is to pride and the less able to recognize the limitations imposed upon oneself by sin. That is how perverse the damaged (*vitiata*) nature of humans is (WA 44,508).

24 WA 40.2,325. It is interesting to note that Luther uses the inclusive first person plural here. Perhaps he recognized that he himself was as susceptible to vainglory as Cicero and just as capable of regarding God as nothing more than “an idol.”

25 WA 40.3,244.

Cicero could see that the world must be governed and must have a governor, but he did not know the one who governed it. He could not, because “sin blinded his nature” (WA 39.2,346). Of the incarnation, the central truth of Christianity, no philosopher, including Cicero, Luther declares, ever even conceived of the possibility (WA 39.2,14). Cicero said many true things about the state, but there is something greater than the state, of which even the most well-meaning and thoughtful worldlings have to remain ignorant. There is a deeper, hidden truth (*veritas in abscondito*).²⁶ This truth does not lie at the surface, and it is not apprehended by human reason alone, but rather it is revealed to human minds by the Word (WA 42,486). Despite all that he wrote about the state, Cicero did not really “touch on its efficient and final cause,” namely God (WA 40.3,202-3). There is no Ciceronian doctrine about how the earth and humans and everything else was created (WATR 1,281).

If his metaphysics were deficient, the Roman statesman’s political sense also was not consistently emulable. Cicero did not always exhibit correct judgment when it came to applying his mind to solving practical problems or assessing political situations.²⁷ Nor were his ethical teachings above reproach. The application of the ancient Roman’s wise teachings about human behavior is necessarily limited to the kingdom of this world, the kingdom of God’s “left hand,” as Luther puts it. The Scriptures set forth a wholly different ethic than Cicero’s, namely the law of love (John 13:34). In contrast with Christ’s counterintuitive instructions to his followers in the Sermon on the Mount, “the philosophy of the Gentiles” recommends that enemies be hated and not cherished. To Luther’s mind, “the Sacred Scriptures teach ethics, or the basis for obligations, far better than Ciceros or Aristotles could ever do” (WA 42,478).

How did it ultimately benefit Cicero and other philosophers to come up with such beautiful thoughts full of wisdom and moral advice necessary “for living out this life,” Luther wonders, when they themselves “did not have the light of eternal wisdom?”²⁸ The righteousness of Cicero, for which he was often extolled, is different from the righteousness of faith. It is civic virtue, consisting of works done for the benefit not of God, but of a temporal entity, the Roman

26 WA 40.2,389.

27 WATR 4,366. While Luther admires Cicero’s brave dedication to his cause, he does not himself express much interest in what exactly that cause may have been. The details of Cicero’s metaphysical thought interest Luther far more than his politics. By contrast, it was precisely Cicero’s insistence on a mixed constitution with power shared among the classes (as opposed to monarchy) for which he was so often praised by the revolutionary thinkers of the late eighteenth century.

28 WA 40.3,608.

state, which is no more substantial “than a water bubble” (*bullā aquatica*).²⁹ Even the most honorable pagans, Cicero included, possess only the counterfeit righteousness of the flesh and the world, not the righteousness of the kingdom of Christ (WA 40.1,554). All of their lofty wisdom and brave heart and good will go for naught, if they do not recognize that God is the one who does everything and makes it prosper (WA 51,215). God confounds the wisdom of even “the most prudent men” (WA 20,29). The wisdom and righteousness of great and outstanding men like Cicero, even with all of their civic honors, count for nothing before him (WA 40.1,543). Indeed, the wives of Jacob, Leah and Rachel, as they went about their mundane daily chores, tending to the needs of the flocks and herds, were able to please God more than Cicero and other noble pagans, “even if one of them had sweated blood” (WA 43,614-5).

The same ambivalence in Luther’s attitude toward Cicero is also apparent when we turn to the issue of his literary style. To be sure, Luther did express his respect for Cicero’s eloquence as well as for contemporary “Ciceronians” who sought to imitate him (WAB 8,177), but it would be misleading to leave unmentioned here the many ways in which “the real German Cicero” denigrates the style of Cicero when compared with that of the Holy Scriptures. For Luther, there is a fundamental difference between the language of Cicero, much as he respects it, and that of the Bible. The former’s words are “dead and past,” while the words of the Holy Spirit are “living, present, future, and eternal” (WATR 2,170). Commenting on the creative power of God’s language at the beginning of creation, Luther declares that God’s words are not simply words but are actually the things themselves that they call into being (WA 42,17). Brief, direct, and powerful, biblical language expresses the profound reality of the truths it contains, simply and naturally, not in the copious, studied style of Ciceronian discourse. Of the single word “father,” as applied to God, for instance, Luther observes that when it is spoken with the heart, this one simple word represents “an eloquence that Virgil and Cicero never knew.” It is not a matter of verbal entreaty only, but of “groaning.” Even if all the orators in the world were to try to express it, the thought would still remain “inexpressible” (WA 40.1,586).

It may take many years of study to master Cicero, Virgil, and Terence, but how much more effort must it take, Luther asks, really to learn three simple biblical expressions: what it means “to love God, to trust in him, and to fear him” (WATR 4,491). Similarly, even though the words Adam used to name Eve, “mother of all living” (Gen. 3:20), “are very few,” nonetheless the speech of our first parent is such as “neither Demosthenes nor Cicero ever composed,” expressed in the language of “the most eloquent Holy Spirit” (WATR 3,378). Of

29 WA 39.1,101.

the simple expression “he rose up,” which is used in Genesis 4:8 to describe one point in Cain’s action (as he prepared to kill Abel after God preferred his brother’s sacrifice to his own), Luther wonders “how many tragic elements Cicero or Livy would need to include in a speech in order to express the anger of Cain and the fear of Abel, the quarrels, entreaties, tears, hands raised in supplication, etc.” (WA 42,207).³⁰ Of Psalm 22:23 (“I will tell your name to my brothers”), Luther observes that the psalmist is describing, “as no Cicero” could ever do, what the kingdom of Christ is:

namely, a brotherhood, to be specific, one of the sort that has eternal life, salvation, and rescue from sins, from the devil. In short, it is the kingdom of heaven. He also applies to the description of this kingdom the word *narrabo* (“I will tell”). For he says that it is the kingdom of the word, that it exists in *narrare* (“telling”) and continues to the last day, till we also become blessed. So the kingdom is briefly and masterly conceived as no Cicero and no poet could do it, because it is not the kingdom of Caesar or the king of Galilee, but of Christ (WA 31.1,361).

The language of Old Testament prophets like Isaiah may seem to proceed randomly and not in accord with the usual expectations for *dispositio*. It may seem as though these ancient authors were raging drunk (*ut ebrii et furiosi*), but they are not, and their words do cohere, Luther says. The reader must discern their strange concinnity with the help of the Holy Spirit, who is “the best rhetorician and logician” and who, despite all apparent obscurity, “speaks most clearly” (WA 31.2,83). However differently they may have organized their thoughts than Demosthenes and Cicero, the biblical prophets achieved a kind of pathos whose powerful effect surpasses that of the pagan orators (WATR 3,123). Of Psalm 2:9 (“You will rule them with a rod of iron”), Luther observes that this sort of expression “does not belong to Cicero or Virgil” but is rather the language of “lightning and thunder” (WA 40.2,270). The forcefulness of the Bible’s language reflects the supreme power of its ultimate author. God’s will as it is expressed in his divine commands has such energy and effect “as will not

30 Although neither Cicero nor Livy ever wrote tragedies in the generic sense of the word, Luther describes them as *tragoedia* authors (WA 42,207). By “tragedy,” he must mean not the literary genre itself, but rather the subject matter of tragedies, namely, the rise and fall of powerful individuals. In Latin, the dramatic productions of the ancient Greeks were often termed *fabulae*. Luther seems to have been largely unfamiliar with the works of the famous Greek tragedians: Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides.

be found in any orator's orations, not even those of Demosthenes or Cicero" (WA 43,210).

Luther describes Jesus's language in similar terms. It is simple, powerful, and direct (e.g., the Lord's Prayer), unlike Cicero's convoluted writings which proceed "in a crablike way" (*cancri more*) and are far less effectual (WA 20,30). It does not surprise Luther that Christ's descriptive language is so much more artfully constructed than anything Cicero or Demosthenes were able to achieve. After all, as Luther asks rhetorically, "should not the one who made the mouth himself be eloquent?"³¹ Luther believes that the eloquence of Christ far surpasses that of "Cicero and Virgil," those supreme examples of ancient verbal expressiveness. They could use language effectively, of course, but Jesus's language was superior. Of John 3:16-17, Luther observes that the passage possesses "as much majesty, simplicity, clearness, depth, useful value, and pleasure as can be taught in rhetorical form. I love this text very much" (WA 36,183). No doubt Cicero would have considered a simple saying of Jesus's such as this one or John 14:24 ("The word which you hear is not mine") far too simply stated (WA 36,179). The words of Jesus are simple, but they are powerfully efficacious, and it is no easy matter even for Cicero or Homer or anyone else relying on human reason alone to understand the impact of such divine language, since one cannot analyze God as one does humans (WA 33,73-4).

In speaking of the Apostle Paul's discourse Luther marvels at its verbal richness and suggests hyperbolically that "one word" of Paul's "likely has three Ciceronian orations in it" (WATR 6,202). Of course, Paul does not use such "high and fancy words" as ancient orators like Demosthenes and Cicero, but he speaks "appropriately and pointedly," given his audience and the context, and his words are filled with "great" significance (WATR 5,23). In reference to Paul's rhetorical question to the Galatians in 4:15 ("Where is then the blessedness ye spake of?"), Luther compares the biblical author's rhetorical effectiveness favorably with Cicero's. Paul's aim is "to anticipate with his honey and flattery the false apostles," responding in advance to their possible future objections, so that they would have no room to render his words less meaningful or appealing (WA 40.1,639-40).

Cicero's eloquence in the service of politics played a role in his undoing, according to Luther's *Annotationes in Ecclesiasticen*. He would have been happy if only he had known how to enjoy living a quiet life. "But since that good man always desired greater things and urged that his counsel be followed in vain, see how many good things he deprived himself of, bringing calamity and death upon himself" (WA 20,13). Luther knew something about having a restless

31 WA 59,168.

genius. He was not so very different from Cicero in this regard, as he himself recognized. Even if God were to give Luther “the eloquence of Cicero, the power of Caesar, or the wisdom of Solomon,” it would be insufficient. It is human nature to want what we do not have, to despise present reality: “When one does not have a wife, he seeks her; when he has her, he grows tired of her” (WA 20,14). So, what was the point of Cicero’s devotion to eloquence? It was all in vain because he did not gain what he wanted, and he ended up just like Caesar, assassinated. “He would have surely been happier” if he had used his eloquence not with an eye to achieving his own personal ends but in accordance with what other people needed and could use from him (WA 20,21).

Luther more than once equates Cicero’s eloquence with that of Erasmus. Like many others of “our age,” Luther observes, Erasmus was marvelously blessed with erudition and the ability to speak. But, he continues:

whenever Erasmus begins to speak about justification and things of faith, he stammers terribly and is at a loss for words, although he is absolutely successful at explaining other things.... Just so Cato overcame Cicero on the senate floor, even if he were speaking nothing but riddles and setting them forth in the most uncouth way without any oratorical finesse (WA 42,596).

Luther may himself have wished that Cicero could find some kind of place in heaven, but he was outraged when he heard that after Erasmus had finished reading *De senectute* he had said that he could hardly refrain from crying out: *Sancte Cicero, ora pro nobis*. “Isn’t that a foolish thing to say?” Luther asked. “Is Cicero supposed to be holy just because he can talk well?”³²

Let us return to a passage analyzed in an earlier chapter: “Philipp has words and substance; Erasmus, words without substance; Luther substance without words; Karlstadt neither substance nor words.” Even if, as we suspect, Luther was much more confident in his verbal abilities than such self-deprecating remarks would lead one to believe, it still is significant that he would distance himself in this way from *verba*. Whether this is a completely truthful bit of self-analysis or not, we should not only acknowledge that Luther himself often disparaged his own rhetorical abilities and celebrated his dedication to facts, but also ask ourselves what such an intellectual posture could have meant. In his commentary on Ecclesiastes, we read: “And when Demosthenes was asked how one would go about speaking correctly or well, he answered: ‘If he does

32 WATR 4,659.

not say anything except what he knows well” (WA 20,199).³³ In a letter of 1522, Luther declares that even Ciceronian eloquence will not suffice if it is not connected with the truth: “The truth is more powerful than eloquence.... Cicero’s eloquence was quite often overcome by lesser eloquence in the law courts” (WAB 2,544). Luther’s insistent demarcation between *res* and *verba*, with his decided preference for *res* and not *verba*, represents a significant departure on his part from a basic assumption in Ciceronian rhetorical theory that *res* and *verba* constitute a unified whole.

The fairly elegant Latin style Luther was at pains to practice in some of his earliest writings, including letters he wrote to humanistically inclined contemporaries, is not characteristic of all of Luther’s Latin prose. Consider, for example, the relatively unadorned doctrinal statements he authored for use in theological disputations at Wittenberg.³⁴ At first, disputations were considered so problematic by the humanists at the University of Wittenberg that they suspended giving doctoral degrees in theology. The concern was that the very form of the disputation itself had been contaminated by scholasticism and its emphasis on dialectic. Luther, however, loved debate and felt that disputations did have a place in the curriculum, and “he was delighted when the doctoral degree—and the disputation” were reinstated in Wittenberg.³⁵ In these disputations, adornment is conspicuously absent. The emphasis is on making clear distinctions on the basis of grammar, dealing with patristic authorities, refuting other points of view, and the like. There is nothing incorrect or unclear about the Latin style, to be sure, but the crisp, argumentative tone of a disputation as the author proceeds methodically from numbered point to numbered point sounds more like the succinct Latin theological prose of Aquinas than it does a Ciceronian dialogue or an Erasmian essay.³⁶ The parts of a speech may be enumerated, to be sure, but there are usually far more numbers in an academic disputation than in a typical Ciceronian oration, and their effect is far different.

Consider, too, Luther’s oft cited sentences in “The Freedom of the Christian” (WA 7,49): “The Christian man is the freest lord over all, subject to none. The Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, subject to all.” As they stand, these clashing sentences, juxtaposed dramatically side by side without any

33 WA 20,199.

34 The famous 95 Theses were originally entitled *Disputatio pro declaratione virtutis indulgentiarum* (WA 1,229). Luther intended the theses to serve as starting points for academic discussion and debate.

35 Haran, *Martin Luther*, 72.

36 See, for instance, the disputations collected in WA 39 (1533–45).

coordinating clause or conjunction, most decidedly fail to satisfy the Ciceronian criterion of clarity, as Luther himself acknowledges. It is the baffling paradox here that delights Luther, the fact that both statements must be held in the reader's mind at the same time and not cancel each other out right away, even though they are so contrary to each other. Taken together the two sentences present the reader with a mysterious conundrum that will not be any more easily solved with the benefit of logic than Luther's other paradoxical assertion that the Christian is *simul iustus et peccator*. Lutheran theology insists on preserving the tense relationship between Law and Gospel. Lutheran preaching combines the condemnation of sin and the gracious expression of forgiveness in one dynamic process. Jesus Christ is true God and also true man, and according to the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the bread and wine are also, at one and the same time, Christ's body and blood. It is not surprising that Luther's literary style should abound in paradox.³⁷

Cicero does employ paradoxes in his speeches, often very wittily, but their function is usually to blame and praise someone else (typically a client) or to defend himself.³⁸ They often are imbedded in longer, hypotactic sentences and do not usually appear, as Luther's paradoxical statement does in *The Freedom of the Christian*, in the form of two unconnected sentences, consisting of one clause each, expressing nothing but the paradox. In the opening lines of his speech for Milo, for instance, Cicero comments on the fact that there are troops stationed outside the courtroom (*Pro Milone* 1.1-2). Even though they are there because they are supposed to prevent violence, their mere presence in such a setting is a cause for alarm. Cicero concludes that the very act of providing a guarantee against fear must itself create some fear in the process. By contrast, the purpose of Luther's paradoxical sentences in this treatise seems less to win his readers' sympathy than to stun them. The effect of these powerful, absolute statements is to reduce his readers' confidence in their own ability to reason or to use common sense, compelling them instead to submit to the Word of God, which is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

37 Luther's ultimate model in this regard may be the Apostle Paul. See, e.g., 2 Cor. 6:8-10: "As deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

38 See Kienpointner, "Persuasive Paradox in Cicero's Speeches," 47-63. On Cicero's *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, see Wallach, "Rhetoric and Paradox," 171-183.

Luther's preaching, for the most part, cannot be described as "Ciceronian," except in the loosest sense of the word. Students of Luther's preaching style have pointed out that it was influenced by Quintilian's rhetorical theory, which means that it is "Ciceronian" in a very general sense of the word.³⁹ And certainly, as we have seen, Luther was aware of the importance of the general rhetorical principles followed by Cicero and many other successful public speakers. But Luther himself disparaged his preaching style, observing that he was sparer and dryer than Bugenhagen, who offered "many commonplaces" in his sermons and for that reason was to be regarded as "the best public reader" (*optimus lector*).⁴⁰ In this same context, Luther discloses that he frequently had nightmares that he was supposed to preach and had no idea (*conceptum*) what he was going to say (WATR 3,357-8).

Many of the sermons Luther preached after returning from the Wartburg and throughout the rest of his life are exegetical in nature, following a biblical text whose structure informs the structure of the sermon.⁴¹ As a result his sermonizing in general must be judged to be more spontaneous, less minutely rehearsed, less painstakingly constructed than Cicero's usually carefully crafted orations.⁴² Luther's primary aim in these sermons is to help his listeners understand the text before him (either one of the lessons chosen for the day or part of a *lectio continua*).⁴³

His last sermon preached in Eisleben, for instance, begins with only the most minimal of proemiums: "This is a beautiful Gospel [Matt.11:25-30] and covers a lot of ground. But we shall now talk about part of it, as much as we can and as God's grace allows." The peroration is equally perfunctory: "This and

39 See, e.g., O'Malley, "Luther the Preacher," 3-16, and Nembach, *Predigt des Evangeliums*.

40 On Bugenhagen's preaching as opposed to Luther's, see Leppin's discussion in Dingel and Rhein, *Der späte Bugenhagen*, 127-139.

41 On Luther's preaching, see in addition to Kiessling's fundamental study: Baughman, "Martin Luther, the Preacher," 21-49; Wood, "Luther as a Preacher," 109-121; Meuser, *Luther the Preacher*; and Kreitzer, "Lutheran Sermon," 35-64. The sheer quantity of sermonic material to be studied (some 2,300 of Luther's sermons are included in the Weimarer Ausgabe) as well as the problems associated with transcription makes the study of Luther's preaching a challenging scholarly assignment.

42 "He usually took into the pulpit with him what he called his *Konzept*, a brief outline or plan—written in German—of how he would proceed" (Meuser, *Luther the Preacher*, 35-36).

43 He preached on the Gospel of John in the *Pfarrkirche* in Wittenberg on Sundays in Bugenhagen's absence in 1537-8, beginning with the very first verse. According to Spitz ("Luther and Humanism," 93), Luther was "always textual" in his preaching, with only around seventy of his extant sermons "not based specifically on a sermon text."

much more in addition might be said about this Gospel, but I am too weak. We shall leave it at that."⁴⁴ Lest one assume that the brevity of such beginnings and endings of sermons is the result of weakness and old age on Luther's part, one need only look at other, earlier examples. The third of the *Invocavit* Sermons, preached in Wittenberg when Luther was much younger (1522), ends simply: "Enough of this for now."⁴⁵ The fifth sermon in the series ends on an equally abrupt note: "For today this is enough; we shall say more tomorrow" (WA 10.3,47). The second sermon he preached at the funeral of the Elector, Duke John of Saxony, begins: "Because we are still in the week of mourning and have begun to console ourselves with the Word of God from St. Paul's Epistle, we shall now say something more about it to console you further and to explain fully the text we have taken up" (WA 36,255). While this is more elaborate than other sermonic introductions of Luther's, there is still no attempt at any sort of *captatio benevolentiae*, no *insinuatio*, no attempt to find a topic other than the text before him, which Luther plans to explicate in a business-like way, even on a special occasion such as this.

Luther prefers to use plain, direct language in his preaching. He detests "sophistic" language and commends Quintilian for warning against speaking in a way that is not straightforward (*ambigue*; WATR 1,195). It may be no accident that Luther took the works of the ancient Roman comic playwright Plautus along with him when he entered the monastery in Erfurt; the sermonic style which seems to come most naturally to Luther resembles the informal conversations of the old Latin comedies (the language not only of slave owners but of slaves themselves, women and common people, courtesans) more than the stately periodic prose of Cicero's orations, addressed to Roman aristocratic males.⁴⁶ Luther consciously adapted his sermons to the needs of his audience, no matter their class or gender, no matter how undereducated they might be: "Dear God," he once declared, "there are sixteen-year-old girls who come into the church, women, old men, and farmers; they don't understand sublime language!" Christ himself could have taught at a very high level, Luther observes, but "he wanted to hand down his teachings most simply (*simplicissime*), so that the ordinary people could understand." Luther went so far as to make a vow (never fulfilled) to write "a book against smart preachers" (*klugen prediger*; WATR 4,635). The best preacher, to his mind, was the one who was able to teach

44 WA 51,187 and 194.

45 WA 10.3,30. For a thorough-going rhetorical analysis of these sermons, see Leroux, *Luther's Rhetoric*, 41–141.

46 WATR 1,44.

simpliciter et pueriliter et populariter et trivialiter ("simply, and in a child-like and popular way, and at a basic level").

Luther's sermons sound fresh and vigorous and are filled with examples of his lively sense of humor. He understood instinctively, it seems, the indispensable rhetorical importance of connecting with audiences of all sorts in the most immediate way possible: "Look people straight in the mouth."⁴⁷ The memorable advice to would-be preachers attributed to Luther and sometimes even inscribed on chancel doors of Lutheran churches stresses the importance of bold vigor and brevity, exploiting the rhetorical device of epiphora: *Tritt frisch auf. Tu Maul auf. Hör bald auf.* ("Step up with fresh vigor; open up your mouth; finish up without delay.")⁴⁸

Even when he took up controversial or complicated issues from the pulpit, Luther spoke in colorful, vivid terms that all in his audience, young and old, could easily apprehend. One of his students, Georg Benedict, recorded his impression of Luther and his delivery: "He was a man of modest stature, with a sharp and gentle voice: gentle in tone, but sharp in the articulation of syllables, words, and phrases. For he spoke neither too fast nor too slow, but at a moderate speed, without impediment and with great emphasis."⁴⁹ His lively sense of humor often tempered his fierce polemics, as may be seen, for instance, in a *Hauspredigt* of 1537 on the grim subject of death: "And even if it were a case of being in the midst of dying, we could still bid defiance to death and say: 'Eat me, death, go ahead and eat me! You are going to spew me out again, if God wills it, and I will raise such a ruckus in your stomach that you won't know where you should go'" (WA 45,20). In her analysis of this passage, Stolt points out that children may well have been in the congregation that heard this sermon and suggests that they may have laughed heartily at the description of Luther rolling around uncontrollably in death's stomach.⁵⁰

47 As quoted in Timothy Wengert's review of Birgit Stolt, "*Lasst uns fröhlich springen!*" 81.

48 Cf. WATR 4,692. As Burnett points out ("How to Preach a Protestant Sermon," 110), "Luther never explicitly described how one should go about writing a sermon, and his preaching was a hard act to follow." The seventeenth-century homilectician Christopher Schleupner viewed Luther's preaching as an example of "the heroic method" of pulpit oratory, so idiosyncratic as to be "inimitable" and never able "to be taught." It may be that Luther is so difficult to categorize in this regard because he was a professor who happened to do a lot of preaching. Generic boundaries between "sermon" and "lecture" were not clearly demarcated, it seems, in his mind. He regularly taught from the pulpit and preached in the classroom.

49 WA 57, lxxvi. According to Petrus Mosellanus, who heard him speak at the Leipzig Debate (1519), Luther had "a high, clear voice" (Marty, *Martin Luther*, 50).

50 Stolt, *Rhetorik des Herzens*, 187. For Cicero's theory of humor, see *De oratore* 2.216-90.

Anti-Ciceronianism, Flacius, and Bengel

Luther was not the only humanist of the early modern period to critique Cicero and decline to imitate his Latin prose style in everything he wrote. As we have seen, Lorenzo Valla preferred Quintilian to Cicero.⁵¹ He compared favorably a declamation attributed to Quintilian, *Gladiator*, to Cicero's *Pro Ligario*. Guillaume Budé, a French philologist and correspondent of Erasmus and Thomas More, showed in his scholarship how much Cicero owed to the Greeks and advocated for the incorporation of Greek phraseology into Latin prose compositions. He was referred to as a *Ciceromastix*.⁵² In his *De ratione dicendi* Jean Luis Vives offered the following critique of Cicero's *copia*:

The nerves are often buried by flesh and fat, so that they are weakened and are less able to perform their functions. It happens in the same way in style, that the luxuriance of words and the redundancy of flesh and that diffuse and wandering composition become responsible for a weak style, which happened to Cicero who, while he diluted his subject matter too much with words, lost strength, as a river that flows out widely.⁵³

By the end of the sixteenth century, a full-blown reaction against Ciceronianism was underway. It went much further than Erasmus's mild corrective. One of the main proponents of this new tendency was Justus Lipsius, a Flemish humanist, who briefly taught at the Lutheran university in Jena. Lipsius emphatically preferred Senecan stylistics to Ciceronian. Of Lipsius's own Latin style, Morris Croll observes:

Giving terseness primacy, Lipsius looks to four correctives—perspicuity, simplicity, graceful charm (*venustatem*), and appropriateness (*decentiam*)—and makes “brevity and clarity” his formula, under Senecan influence. His style is expressive, nervous, elliptical, precise; as in Seneca, sentences are neat, ellipses easily understood, points clarified by their expressed form: antithesis in thought accompanies antithesis in expression.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Pagliaroli, “Una proposta per il giovane Valla,” 9–67.

⁵² Rolfe, *Cicero*, 147.

⁵³ Transl. in Trimpf, *Ben Jonson's Poems*, 54.

⁵⁴ Croll, “Justus Lipsius and the Anti-Ciceronian Movement,” 27–29.

Anti-Ciceronians like Lipsius preferred the memorable prose of the Stoic Seneca and the unusual formulations of Tacitus to the more predictable, stuffy Cicero.⁵⁵ Or they turned to Greek models like Plato's dialogues to create a quieter, informal style that more closely resembled casual conversation. Among those writers who might be considered anti-Ciceronian, we could include Michel de Montaigne, Francis Bacon, John Milton, and Blaise Pascal. Two divergent stylistic tendencies have been observed among authors such as these, sometimes called the "loose" and the "curt." Of the former, Highet remarks that it is a style designed "not for speaking, but for reading and lonely brooding: it gives the impression of overhearing ... actual thoughts as they ramble on and grow out of one another and become ever more intricately involved in a world of their own." Its practitioners use short clauses which they build "into larger sentences and paragraphs by light and informal connexions, with little symmetry." Highet suggests that Marcel Proust and his "profoundly meditative, luxuriantly evocative style" is a "modern descendant" of this tendency.⁵⁶

On the other hand, the "curt" style was "more pithy, more drastic." In such prose, "thought after thought is dropped from the writer's mind as it is formed. The reader supplies the links." Here is an example from a sermon preached by John Donne at St. Paul's in London (1623):

In the great Ant-hill of the whole world, I am an Ant; I have my part in the Creation, I am a Creature. But there are ignoble Creatures. God comes nearer; In the great field of clay, of red earth, that man was made of, and mankind, I am a clod, I am a man, I have my part in the Humanity; But Man was worse than annihilated again.⁵⁷

Undoubtedly, the stylistic movements that began in a reaction against Ciceronianism are related to the development of other, contemporary aesthetic developments like Euphuism with its love of word play (in late sixteenth-century England), Mannerism in painting and sculpture (e.g., the attenuated figures in the paintings of El Greco), and Baroque architecture (the parenthetical style that interrupts the integrated Ciceronian period could be said to resemble the "broken pediment").

55 On Lipsius's admiration of Plautus, see van der Poel, "Lipsius as a Defender of Plautus," 179–183.

56 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 325–326.

57 Ibid., 326. John Donne refers to the tomb of Tullia, Cicero's much loved and lamented daughter, in his *Epithalamion* of 1613.

That the movement involved more than purely aesthetic considerations is certain. If Ciceronian stylistics was endorsed so very heartily by the majority of Renaissance humanists and the magisterial Protestant Reformers (to say nothing of the Jesuits), voices even slightly tinged with Senecan or Tacitean accents might sound as though they were raised in some sort of protest. That anti-Ciceronianism came to be associated with unorthodox thought or libertinism, therefore, should not surprise us. The fact that Machiavelli so frequently invokes Tacitus, the caustic critic of the emperor Nero, or that Pascal's attack on the Jesuits, *Lettres provinciales*, is modeled after the Stoic Epictetus suggests that the style such authors chose to employ was not simply a question of choosing the medium of expression that "sounded better," but also reflected and represented fundamental differences in their "way of thinking."⁵⁸

Despite the fact that the time period in which they lived and thought is often termed "the early modern," the Renaissance and Reformation humanists may be said to have shared more in common with their medieval forebears than with their modern descendants, at least in respect to their dedication to the importance of language and their high regard for authority and tradition. By the seventeenth century, however, it is clear that radical changes in thought were fully underway, especially with the emergence of scientific thinking. What Ben-Tov calls "significant tectonic shifts" were taking place, which would lead to "the epochal decline of Christian humanism."⁵⁹ For philosophers like Francis Bacon and John Locke, the empirical observation of nature replaced the earlier unqualified respect for tradition. Experimentation replaced authority. In the course of this development, language came increasingly to be seen as a tool, a means to an end rather than an end in its own right. And even as a tool, language was considered more limited in its access to the truth than methods of inquiry using scientific instruments such as Galileo's telescope. In his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke declared with some vehemence that if we really want to describe "things as they are," we have no choice but to admit that the entire field of rhetoric, including "all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgment; and so indeed are perfect cheats."⁶⁰ "Pleasure and delight" have

58 Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 326. Highet suggests that in his discourses Epictetus's "thought appears, like an athlete, stripped and ready for the contest." On Machiavelli and Tacitus, see Fontana, "Capax Imperii," 207–232.

59 Ben-Tov, "Pagan Gods in German Universities," 177. See Schmidt-Biggemann on the decline of the "Ciceronian sciences" in "New Structures of Knowledge," 489–530.

60 As quoted in Hankins and Silverman, *Instruments and the Imagination*, 9.

their place in discourse, Locke admits, but only for the purposes of entertainment, not if one is searching for “information and improvement.”⁶¹

Opinions such as these did not emerge in isolation; they swam in the intellectual currents of the times. The members of “The Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge” (founded in 1660) “went so far as to express the opinion that nothing could be accomplished unless all ancient arts were rejected.” They insisted that “everything that wore the face of antiquity should be destroyed, root and branch.”⁶² The famous *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* in France in the late seventeenth century explicitly pitted the traditional authority of the classics against more modern, empirical ways of thinking and expression.

Still, it should be noted that Cicero continued to be studied and respected and quoted even during this period of violent reaction against him. Montaigne disliked Cicero, especially early on in his literary career:

His way of writing ... seems to me boring. For his prefaces, definitions, partitions, etymologies, consume the greater part of his work; what life and marrow there is, is smothered by his long-winded preparations. If I have spent an hour in reading him, which is a lot for me, and I remember what juice and substance I have derived, most of the time I find nothing but wind.

But Montaigne is still obliged to say of the eloquent Cicero that he “is entirely beyond comparison; I believe that no man will ever equal him.”⁶³ And he ended up quoting from his works over 300 times in his *Essais*.⁶⁴ In his 1605 treatise on “The Advancement of Learning,” Bacon called Cicero “the best, or second, orator.”⁶⁵

61 As quoted in Mitchell, *Contagious Metaphor*, 17. It is quite ironic that Locke finds it necessary to use metaphors to make his case against metaphors. At one point he describes language as a “conduit” which could “corrupt the fountains of knowledge which are in things themselves” and “break or stop the pipes whereby it is distributed to public use.”

62 As quoted in Highet, *Classical Tradition*, 276.

63 Transl. Frame, *Complete Works of Montaigne*, 301–302, as quoted in Kennedy, “Cicero’s Oratorical and Rhetorical Legacy,” 494–495.

64 See Eden, “Cicero’s Portion,” 39–55. On Rabelais and Cicero, see Weil, *2000 Jahre Cicero*, 174–177.

65 See Kennedy, “Cicero’s Oratorical and Rhetorical Legacy,” 496. In this context, it is worth noting that Bacon immediately qualifies his estimation of Cicero’s rank, thinking perhaps of Demosthenes belatedly and then realizing that he prefers the prototypical Greek orator to the later imitative Roman.

Locke used Cicero's epistles "throughout his life" and recommended them as a model "for all of the correspondence of gentlemen."⁶⁶

Croll famously traced the anti-Ciceronianism of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to the influence of classical authors such as Seneca and Tacitus, but Shuger has pointed out that there was also at the same time a growing interest in the brief, pregnant, and often obscure style of the Hebrew Old Testament. It may have been the latter that helped to generate a distinctive new style that parted significantly from classical models. Regardless of its precise origins, this new way of speaking proved especially popular with Protestant preachers.⁶⁷ The "passionate plain" style is entirely unpretentious but nonetheless profoundly moving in its emotional appeal, thus confounding somewhat the distinctions usually associated with the traditional *genera dicendi*.⁶⁸ Given the wide-spread popularity of preaching in the early modern period, it is hard to generalize about stylistic categories as applied to sermons, especially when speaking of such diverse groups as "conservatives and liberals, Jesuits and Jansenists, Lutherans and Calvinists, and Anglicans and dissenters."⁶⁹ Still, one could say, following Kennedy, that "Calvinists generally favored a plain style but at the same time one imbued with the passion of the Holy Spirit," this in contrast with the tendency in Catholic preaching "to combine the tradition of Ciceronian rhetoric with Old Testament prophecy to create a Christian grand style."

Of special interest to us here is Shuger's suggestion that one of the main contributors to the anti-Ciceronian movement was Matthias Flacius Illyricus. As a teenager Flacius left his home in Croatia for Venice and ended up studying in Wittenberg during Luther's last years. He proved to be a brilliant student and scholar. For a while at least, he served as professor of Hebrew at the university there. He wrote an interpretative guide to the Bible entitled *Clavis scripturae sacrae* (1567), which has been called "the fullest statement of an anti-Ciceronian grand style of sacred rhetoric."⁷⁰ Flacius found the literary

66 Marshall, *John Locke*, 164. According to Cambiano ("Cicerone in Inghilterra," 53), Locke had 29 "Ciceronian titles" in his library.

67 Shuger, "Croll, Flacius Illyricus and Anti-Ciceronianism," 269–284.

68 Barbara Kiefer Lewalski observes that it was expected that "plain preaching, concerned to display God's Word unadorned, would achieve the most powerfully moving effect upon the hearers because of the power resident in the Word itself. The preacher becomes the vehicle for that power precisely as he avoids any display of rhetoric" (Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics*, 225, as quoted by Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 65). For more on the development of the plain style in Christian contexts, see Auksi, *Christian Plain Style*.

69 Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 265–266.

70 Olson quotes this judgment of Shuger (*Matthias Flacius*, 16).

style of the Bible closer to the powerful, unpredictable, and sometimes spare prose of Thucydides and Sallust, according to Shuger, “than to the luxurious and tiring prolixity of Cicero”:

The “violent compression” of scriptural figures, tropes, ideas, and allusions creates a difficult, multi-leveled suggestiveness and coiled force. Rather than explaining things in orderly abstractions, the Scriptures use intertwined tropes, parables, maxims and types to compact the greatest number of ideas into the fewest words. Flacius’s concept of brevity is thus far closer to Auerbach’s hebraic style with its dark, mysterious background punctuated by starkly vivid highlights, than anything resembling Lysian or scientific directness.

Using terminology developed by Northrop Frye, Shuger goes on to suggest that for Flacius the language of the Bible “is not descriptive but hieroglyphic.” It is the kind of text that “invites the reader to make an intuitive leap from the literal to moral and spiritual meanings.”⁷¹

Flacius’s own use of Latin tends to be more vigorous than that of his teacher and later adversary, Melancthon, whose prose can suffer from the kind of predictability that is often associated with teachers and their sometimes tedious lectures. Snappy and pointed, the style of Flacius’s *Clavis* is not highly ornamented, but it clearly possesses lots of passion. For a sample of his Latin prose style, we need look no further than the introduction to his *Clavis Sacrae Scripturae*:

Porro, quod CLAVIS SCRIPTURAE nomen huic Operi imposui, facile agnosco, hoc tum invidiosum valde esse: tum etiam rem, tanti splendoris appellationi minime parem videri. Solus enim agnus Dei est finis legis, et solus ille aperit librum clausum: solus ille tum legi[t], tum etiam cordi nostri velamen illud obscuritatis Mosaicae detrahit. Denique ille solus nobis Scripturam aperit, et cor illustrat, ut mysteria eius vere perspicere, et non per velum divinare possimus [Concordia Seminary Rare Book Collection, Folio BS 1165 F571].

Furthermore, as to the fact that I have given this work the name *Clavis Scripturae*, I readily admit that this title not only could occasion much resentment, but the work also seems to be something not at all deserving of such a splendid descriptive term. For it is the lamb of God alone who

71 Shuger, *Sacred Rhetoric*, 73–74.

is the end of the law, and it is that one alone who opens the closed book [cf. Rev. 5]. It is that one alone who not only reads it, but also removes that veil of Mosaic obscurity from our heart. In the final analysis it is only that one who opens Scripture and illuminates the heart, so that we are able truly to examine its mysteries and not have to guess at their meaning through a veil.

There is nothing terribly complicated or ornate here, but the passage does have a passionate, even polemical tone that predominates, reaching an emotional climax well before the final sentence. Notice especially the repetition of *solus* as it is applied to the divine interpreter, four times in all. Prominently placed, as it is, at the beginning or very near the beginning of three clauses, *solus* is decidedly emphatic. (My translation tries to capture that emphasis by rendering *solus* more fully as: "It is that one alone who....") The first example of *solus* stands at the very beginning of the clause modifying the Lamb of God; the second and third instances of *solus* modify the pronoun *ille*; the anaphora is even more noticeable. After this climactic iteration, the last occurrence of *solus*, this time not placed emphatically at the beginning of the clause but following *Denique* and with the order of *solus* and *ille* reversed, seems designed to offer an aural contrast with the previous clauses, striking a more pacific note that helps to convey the sense of resolution and closure. The rapid dropping of multiple ideas (*est finis legis ... aperit librum clausum ... velamen detrahit*) is one of the characteristics of the "curt" anti-Ciceronian style.

Where did Flacius get his views on stylistics? From the Bible itself, we may be sure. But was there an early modern Latinist whose views on style may have influenced his own? It was probably not Melanchthon, whose style was plain, but rarely passionate, even though he had been his teacher at the University of Wittenberg when Flacius was a student there. Certainly, Flacius's writings were influenced by his famous *praeceptor* in many respects, but the relationship between teacher and student turned quite sour over time. Flacius was eventually to declare that he had learned "more through my own temptations and study than through his [Melanchthon's] lectures."⁷² Indeed, he broke dramatically with Melanchthon in one of the most bitter controversies in the history of Lutheranism, sometimes called "The Adiaphoristic Controversy."⁷³ Flacius vigorously criticized the Leipzig Interim, an agreement arranged by Melanchthon in 1548 and others with Charles V after the death of Luther, and resisted any

⁷² As quoted in Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 47.

⁷³ *Adiaphora* is a Greek word used in this context to designate things or activities neither commanded nor forbidden by God.

kind of compromise, even in matters of *adiaphora*.⁷⁴ Melanchthon and his supporters were referred to as “Philippists,” while those opposing the Interim were called “Gnesio-Lutherans.”⁷⁵

At the heart of Flacius’s polemics was a single-minded dedication to remain entirely faithful to the teachings of Luther, such as the utter inefficacy of good works for humans hoping to gain salvation.⁷⁶ Unlike Melanchthon, who struggled to find a place for good works in the Lutheran doctrine of justification, Flacius insisted on the absolute and inherent sinfulness of human nature. Melanchthon’s enduring respect for Luther’s nemesis, Erasmus, despite his support for the freedom of the human will, was no secret, nor was the fact that he was interested in reaching working agreements with the Catholics and the Reformed, both of whom Luther fiercely opposed his life long. Indeed, Melanchthon has often been judged to be something of a chronic equivocator or “a wanderer between the camps,” as Bainton characterizes him.⁷⁷ Flacius was not interested in compromise.⁷⁸

In 1549 after acquiring a copy of the “Interim,” Flacius wrote numerous letters to Melanchthon urging him to stay unwaveringly loyal to the principle of *sola scriptura* and not to try to placate the Holy Roman Emperor. Even *adiaphora* were not to be compromised when in *statu confessionis*. He implores Melanchthon passionately: “Confess the truth and suffer the consequences! A Christian cannot obtain peace by offending God and serving and satisfying tyrants. Rather be drowned by the Spaniards in the Elbe with a millstone about one’s neck than offend a Christian, deny the truth and surrender the Church to Satan.”⁷⁹

While normally quite irenic, especially in comparison with Luther, Melanchthon’s hot resentment was palpable in the case of Flacius. His former student was a snake, Melanchthon once lamented, that he had nurtured in

74 For a full discussion of the Leipzig Interim, see Kolb and Nestingen, *Sources and Contexts of Book of Concord*, 183–196.

75 The term *gnesio* (Greek for “genuine”) was Melanchthon’s originally and was meant to be understood pejoratively. See Olson, “Matthias Flacius Illyricus,” 4.

76 On Flacius’s high regard for Luther as a “holy man,” a “true hero,” and a “third Elijah,” see Ilić, *Theologian of Sin and Grace*, 96.

77 Bainton, *Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, 69.

78 He also did not believe in astrology, whereas, as we have seen, Melanchthon took it quite seriously (see WA 42.34). While some contemporaries, including Luther, shared Flacius’s reservations on this score, by taking such a position Flacius may have risked being regarded as out of touch with conventional “scientific” thinking by Melanchthon and his students. See Brosseder, “Writing in the Wittenberg Sky,” 557–576.

79 As quoted by Thompson, “Interim Theology and Confessional Integrity,” 42.

his bosom. His concerns were not groundless. Flacius was a brilliant, dogged, and outspoken controversialist. He went so far as to refer to Melanchthon's revered *Loci* punningly as *Lotium* ("urine"). Most likely Flacius is to be included prominently in the company of the theologians with whose rabid temperaments Melanchthon devoutly hoped he would no longer have to concern himself after death. On a little piece of paper on which he wrote when dying to explain why he did not fear death, Melanchthon left the following words: "You will leave sin behind; you will be freed from troubles and from the rabid fury of theologians."⁸⁰

Intriguingly enough for our purposes, Melanchthon's acolytes wrote satirical verses directed against his former student that address not only *what* Flacius has to say but *how* he says it. The problem with Flacius was not simply a matter of doctrinal disagreement but also had a great deal to do with his deficient rhetorical sensibilities. The words of Flacius sound like the disgusting, unmoderated, disruptive noises of an ass. One poem, written by Melanchthon himself, is based on the myth of the battle between the gods and the giants, in which the ass, an animal associated with the god Bacchus, used his loud braying to scare the giants and win the victory. Flacius may well be the noisy ass here, a role in which he was cast more than once by the Philippists:

The Giants are Scattered by the Noise of the Ass

When the Titans were rushing furiously into arms
 And tried to penetrate the heavenly dwelling places with the sword,
 In order that Jupiter might repel the enemy forces from his fatherly
 citadel,
 And even though attacked by them, in order that there be no fear from
 them,
 Imitating the wild goat Pan with deceiving forms,
 He terrified the gigantic monsters with this counterfeit appearance.
 But not even then did the giants, broken by war, cease,
 As long, O Bacchus, as your pack animal, the little ass, was absent.
 When that one crudely imitated trumpets with his noisy mouth,
 The serpent-footed giants cowardly turned their backs in flight.
 Hardly otherwise will the Sophists skilled in the thefts of Autolycus,
 Accusing the true God of many crimes,
 Flee, as they are put down by the noise of the terrifying ass.
 This is the outcome that follows the wars of those who speak nonsense.⁸¹

80 CR 9,1098. See Schöne, "Melanchthon and His Influence," 11.

81 CR 10,631.

Another polemical poem written by Johann Major, one of Melanchthon's supporters, imagines a scene on Noah's ark, with all of the animals (except for the ass) taking part in a worship service led by Noah who is preaching a sermon about the coming Savior. The ass interrupts the service, treading on the wooden deck with his hooves, and drowns out "the sacred words with his hollow hoof." This same profane ass with his dirty hooves has entered the heart of Flacius, according to the author of the poem, who produces "disgusting rumbling sounds" from his stomach. Flacius makes "the noise of an ass," as the poet warns him, and therefore may be judged an ass by most people.⁸²

If Flacius makes tastelessly asinine noises, Melanchthon is as melodious as the nightingale, just like Luther, who was called "the Nightingale of Wittenberg" by the poet Hans Sachs. The first syllable of Philipp Melanchthon's first name and the first two syllables of his last name are "Phil-" and "mela-," respectively; *philomela* is the Greek word for nightingale.⁸³ One of Melanchthon's favorite students, Johann Stigel, the celebrated poet and professor at the University of Jena, wrote *De cuculo et philomela*, which is probably directed against the ungrateful Flacius. In a singing contest between the birds judged by an ass, the harsh cuckoo's song is declared to be superior to the sweet nightingale's.⁸⁴

Flacius's rhetorical theory and practice probably owe less to Melanchthon and more to the Wittenberg mentor whom he practically idolized, Luther. As an academic, Melanchthon specialized in the liberal arts, systematic theology, and the Apostle Paul; Luther taught the Old Testament primarily: Genesis, the psalms, and the prophets.⁸⁵ Although he thought deeply about preaching, Melanchthon was a teacher, first and foremost. His style is clear, careful, and sometimes pedantic.⁸⁶ Luther was a professor too, of course, but he was also quite a preacher, and his literary voice could be prophetic, fiery, kerygmatic. He judged himself to be more emphatic (*vehementior*) than Philipp, as well as more rough and stolid (*crudior et stupidior*). Sometimes, as he declared, "a

82 See *Delitiae poetarum germanorum IV* (Frankfurt: Nicolaus Hoffmann, 1562), 226–227, for the Latin original.

83 Johann Major also authored a Latin satire in 367 hexameters on "The Synod of the Birds" in which Luther is the swan, Melanchthon the nightingale, and Flacius the cuckoo; see Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 317–319.

84 *Poematum Ioannis Stigeli liber sextus* (Jena: Donatus Ritzenbain, 1569). On Stigel's poetry, see Schäfer, "Mit den Waffen der Dichtkunst," 389–407.

85 Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, 7.

86 Dilthey observes that under Melanchthon's hand, "all questions became simple and plain," *Gesammelte Schriften* 11, 163, as quoted in Olson, *Matthias Flacius*, 46.

tough knot in a log requires a tough wedge" (WATR 4,637). When one thinks of the two distinctive components in the "passionate plain style," it would be possible to apply the adjective "plain" to the style of both Melanchthon and Luther, but the adjective "passionate" really only applies to Luther, the prophetic visionary who single-handedly created so much verbal "lightning and thunder" of his own (WA 40.2,270). Melanchthon himself acknowledges the intense ardor of Luther's language in the funeral oration he delivered for him: "But some people, not evil, have complained that Luther was more severe than he had to be. I will not argue against that view, but respond with what Erasmus often said: 'God gave this latter age a harsh doctor in view of the gravity of our maladies.'" Melanchthon observes that "it is common for moderate and temperate minds to disapprove of more ardent impulses whether good or evil."⁸⁷

In his own time and for centuries thereafter, Flacius has often been represented as the persecuted but rightful disciple of Luther's doctrine. In contrast, even though he had been at Luther's right hand throughout his life, Melanchthon has been judged by many to be an essentially timid man who lost his bearings once Luther died and he found himself at the head of a Lutheran movement which he was in no position to steer forward as forcefully as Luther had done. If Luther has been seen by many of his biographers of the twentieth century as a kind of solitary, existentialist hero, battling mightily with supernatural forces and powerful human opposition to wrest authentic meaning for his own life from the abyss of superstition and clerical oppression, based not on his own works or way of life, but on faith alone, then Melanchthon, the reasonable, thoughtful deal-maker, who tried to find a place for good works in the scheme of salvation, must be seen as something of a traitor to the real spirit of Luther's Reformation and the single most obvious cause of its demise. And if Melanchthon's rhetorical and moral teachings owed much to Cicero, then it must follow that Cicero, too, is a problem for the spiritual heirs of Luther's reformation.

Indeed, one of the most famous Protestant theologians of the twentieth century, Karl Barth, argued that it was Melanchthon's insistence, followed only too faithfully by subsequent Lutheran instructors, on having "a whole series of generations of future theologians, philosophers, lawyers, scientists and statesmen and other educated men" fed a diet in school of the moral teachings of Cicero (and Plutarch) that was responsible for the emergence in the eighteenth century of the idea "that the perfect life consisted in the complete autarchy of rational man in a rational world on the basis of the existence and dominion of

87 CR 11,729-30. Weiss, "Erasmus at Luther's Funeral," 91-114.

a Deity guaranteeing this association and thus too man's complete autarchy."⁸⁸ Even if not fully expressed in Reformation times, this idea "had always remained alive, especially in England," according to Barth. "And in Germany too it had only, so to speak hibernated." According to Barth, Melanchthon's classical education program had produced:

hundreds and thousands of people everywhere to whom philosophy was what it had been to countless numbers of people in the time of the emperors of Rome, namely a practical teaching of life, nay more: a whole attitude to life based on this complete authority of rational man in a rational world with a religious background... And strangely enough it continually reappears, either in hidden or in patent form, in the utterances of many a Pietist.⁸⁹

Along the same lines, Oswald Bayer suggests "that Melanchthon's humanism was the means by which the Reformation was corrupted from within by the re-introduction of Scholastic thought."⁹⁰ If viewed from this perspective, pitting Ciceronian humanism against the Reformation, works against faith, Pietism against Orthodoxy, it is not surprising that the fiery Flacius would be recognized as the valiant, if not always successful, hero of "gnesio-Lutheranism," as opposed to Melanchthon, the weak-kneed abdicator of Luther's great cause.⁹¹

Flacius's poor command of German made it difficult for him to serve a parish, and he was unable to gain a permanent professorial position. He experienced a number of personal tragedies, including the death of his wife and some of his children, and he had to move frequently (he was exiled from the city of Strasbourg in 1573, just two years before his death). But despite the tragic course of his life, it could be said that the scope of Flacius's influence after death ended up rivaling Melanchthon's. His insistence on the right of Christians to resist the authority of the state to govern the church was noted in England by the Puritans. One of their manifestos, *The Fortresse of Fathers* (1566), protesting the abuse "of idol stuff, and of things indifferent," and resisting those who consider "th'aucthority of Princes and Prelates larger than the truth is,"

88 Barth, *Protestant Theology*, 62–63.

89 As quoted by Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 199.

90 Bayer, "Philipp Melanchthon," 135. But see Jackson, "Educational Reforms," 71–87, and Rosin, "Reformation, Humanism, Education," 301–318, for alternative perspectives.

91 Bente's description of Flacius verges on the hagiographical: "most faithful, devoted, staunch, zealous, and able exponent and defender of genuine Lutheranism" (*Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* 15,67).

quotes a passage from Flacius's treatise on adiaphora.⁹² He was the most important of the "Magdeburg Centuriators," and his insistence on the importance of historical contextualization for the understanding of the church's doctrine (*historia est fundamentum doctrinae*) has influenced the study of Christian doctrine ever since. Flacius's achievements in the field of hermeneutics have been recognized by such authorities in the field as Wilhelm Dilthey and Hans-Georg Gadamer. His *Clavis* is often considered a pioneering work in helping to establish the discipline.⁹³ Flacius realized that reading any text requires the identification of its scope and intention at the outset in order to interpret it aright.⁹⁴ It has also been suggested that Flacius's "tough, silent literary work" in treating of the distinctive style of the Scriptures lies behind Johann Herder's groundbreaking study of the "spirit" of Hebrew poetry (1782–3). Certainly by the eighteenth century, interest in and appreciation of the Hebraic style of the Old Testament had increased appreciably. The Anglican bishop, Robert Lowth, praises the sententious style of the poetry of the Old Testament, especially its brevity, arguing that it supplies "a more energetic and pointed effect, which is simple and direct and yet just for that reason results in fascinating obscurity."⁹⁵ Whether influenced directly by Flacius or not, the obscure, enigmatic style favored by the so-called "magus of the North," Johann Hamann, cannot be said to resemble at all the copious prose style taught and practiced by Cicero or to possess very much of the didactic clarity sought by the *praeceptor Germaniae*.⁹⁶ The same goes for the literary styles of the philosophical Danish Lutheran Søren Kierkegaard and that famously assertoric nineteenth-century son of a Lutheran pastor and himself a professional classicist, Friedrich Nietzsche.⁹⁷

92 Olson, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus," 5, and Trinterud, *Elizabethan Puritanism*, 101–106.

93 See Thouard, "Wie Flacius zum ersten Hermeneutiker der Moderne wurde," 265–279, and Ebeling, "Hermenutik," 242–262.

94 The golden key to unlocking the mysteries of the Bible is Christ, according to Flacius (cf. Luther's *was Christum treibet*; "whatever emphasizes Christ"). Without such a hermeneutical focus the reader of the Scriptures will find it impossible to make sense of such a complex and diverse book.

95 Milbank, *The Word Made Strange*, 65.

96 Hamann knew Cicero's works well; his *Golgotha* is "peppered with references to Cicero." But it would be a mistake to suppose that his familiarity with Cicero implies anything like "a Hamannian identification with that writer" (Sparling, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 289).

97 While not himself a Ciceronian by any means, Nietzsche did appreciate Cicero's stylistic genius. He considered him to be "one of the greatest rhythmists that ever lived" (Porter, *Nietzsche and Philology*, 344). Nietzsche's debt to Luther has frequently been noted. Karl Holl speaks of "the direct line that leads from Paul via Luther to Nietzsche" (*Cultural Significance of the Reformation*, 190). See also Westfall, "Zarathustra's Germanity," 42–63.

Lapidary brevity, profundity verging on obscurity, and keen wit are qualities amply evident in the Latin prose of a close contemporary of Johann Sebastian Bach, Johann Albrecht Bengel.⁹⁸ A deacon's son, Bengel studied philosophy and theology, including the works of some of the theologians often associated with Lutheran Pietism, Johann Arndt, Philipp Jacob Spener, and Hermann Francke, while at the University of Tübingen. Bengel went on to serve as *Klosterpraeceptor* at an academy in Denkendorf and as a member of the consistory in Stuttgart. One of his earlier scholarly works (1719) was an edition of Cicero's letters.⁹⁹ At the end of his life he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Tübingen. Bengel is best known today for his pioneering work as a textual critic of the Bible. He helped to put into practice the counter-intuitive principle first articulated by Erasmus, that the more difficult reading (*lectio difficilior*) is to be preferred (*proclivi scriptioni praestat ardua*).¹⁰⁰

Bengel was a gifted Latin stylist whose memorable prose is remarkable for its brevity and profundity. The rich terseness of his style is praised by one critic as condensing "more matter into a line than can be extracted from pages of other writers."¹⁰¹ Even though (or perhaps precisely because) he wrote in such short, often incomplete sentences, what he had to say conveyed a sense of impressive weightiness. Nowhere is his distinctive Latin style on more conspicuous display than in his commentary on the New Testament, first published in 1742 but reprinted and translated into other languages frequently thereafter, the *Gnomon Novi Testamenti*.¹⁰²

Let us begin with Bengel's well known mandate: *Te totum applica ad textum; rem totam applica ad te* ("Apply yourself wholly to the text; apply the whole matter of the text to yourself").¹⁰³ Notice the brevity; there are just five words in

98 While most authors of Latin during this period remained faithful to the classical norms taught in the schools, not all of their Latin prose necessarily sought to achieve brilliant Ciceronian or even anti-Ciceronian stylistic effects. Countless doctoral dissertations, scholarly monographs, and introductions to critical editions were produced up through the nineteenth century (and into the twentieth), written in serviceable, if not always sparkling, Latin. Of sixteenth-century theological prose, Hillerbrand (*Protestant Reformation*, xxvii) observes: "By the end of the century, Protestant theological writing was as tedious as Catholic works had been at the beginning." Bengel's Latin is clearly an exception to this rule.

99 Pelikan, "Joh. Albrecht Bengel," 788.

100 See Harrisville, *Pandora's Box Opened*, 39.

101 *British Quarterly Review* 44 (1866), 579.

102 Translated into English in 1861 by Charleton Lewis, better known as the co-editor of *Harp-er's Latin Dictionary* in 1879 (often referred to briefly as "Lewis and Short").

103 Pelikan, "Joh. Albrecht Bengel," 792. The *sententia* was featured prominently in the preface to Nestle's Greek New Testament throughout the course of multiple editions over the years.

each of the two parts of this *sententia*. It is highly memorable, a good example of lapidary, “Attic” Latinity at its best. Observe, too, the sharp antithesis of the two ideas being contrasted. The would-be scriptural exegete is supposed to apply himself completely to the text. Bengel’s own total devotion to his exegetical task lasted a life-time as a teacher and scholar of the Scriptures. But there are two counterpoised ideas here, and the second, even though couched in much the same language as the first, has quite a different meaning, albeit closely related and equally important: the substance of the text must be completely applied to yourself. Bengel was a Pietist and as such he felt that scholarly work, no matter how objectively pursued, would be incomplete without a personal, spiritual application. The Bible was for him not just an object of scholarly study but a lively force that actively shaped the believer’s mind, heart, and way of life.

The contrast of ideas is reinforced by the chiasmic word order: the same word, *te*, begins the first and ends the second, a frame, as it were, that binds the two halves of the *sententia* together into one larger one. Antithesis works best when there are commonalities, not just differences, that force the reader not only to contrast but also to compare: what is different; what is similar? Both halves of the *sententia* include *te*; both start out with the accusative objects of the verb; both use the imperative *applica* as the central word; both employ the preposition *ad*.

One of the most crucial connecting words, the conjunction joining the two halves of the *sententia*, is left out. Is it unnecessary or crucial? Ciceronian clarity and Melanchthonian didactic helpfulness would urge that the semi-colon be explained, elaborated. As it stands, the semi-colon is an ambiguity that begs for clarification. Asyndeton is such a powerful figure of speech precisely because it deliberately leaves connections open to doubt and interpretation. So what is the connection between these two thoughts? Is it really adversative? Or are the two thoughts necessary corollaries of each other? One cannot be accomplished fully without the other. Or is it a temporal relation, with one following the other, as the day the night? Bengel does not explain the parallelism, or attempt to clarify. Of course, neither does the psalmist—or the Old Testament prophet. (That would be a little like explaining a joke.) Clarity may be one of the canons of Ciceronian *elocutio*, but Bengel cares more about being suggestive than definitive. The reader must connect the two disparate yet similar parts, in the same way that the viewer of a Baroque façade must supply the missing piece when gazing at a “broken pediment.”

For a second example, let us compare Bengel and Melanchthon, both writing on 1 Corinthians 13:13: “And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Melanchthon’s words below are followed by Bengel’s:

Per hoc, quod dicitur: "Maior charitas," effici non potest non iustificare fidem. Primum enim apostolus de charitate erga proximum loquitur, sicut patet in toto contextu orationis.... Deinde ut maxime sit maior charitas, et sit amor dei, tamen fidei tribuitur iustificatio, quia ipsa alienam nobis iustitiam communicat, scilicet Christi, cuius iustitia iusti sumus et nos, ergo quod dicit "Maior charitas," intelligendum est de fructibus, quia charitas maior, [i.e.]: amplior est, plus fructuum et operum habet, latius spargitur, latius effundit se in alios quam fides.

MELANCHTHON, *Annotations on 1st Corinthians*; DONNELLY, p. 154

Just because it says: "Love is greater," does not make it possible that it means that faith does not justify. For the Apostle speaks in the first place of love towards one's neighbor, as is clear in the whole context of the speech.... Then as love may be very much greater, and even be the love of God, nonetheless justification is attributed to faith, because it itself communicates to us an alien righteousness, namely, that of Christ, by whose righteousness we too are just; therefore, the fact that he says "Love is greater" must be understood to be said about fruits, because love is greater, is more expansive, has more fruit and works, is spread more widely, pours itself more widely into others, than faith.

Non est proprie sermo de duratione ... sed de valore, in antitheto ad prophetiam etc. hoc sensu: omnibus rationibus subductis, haec tria sunt necessaria et sufficientia; stent modo haec tria. haec sunt: haec manent: nil amplius.... Fides est in Deum; spes, pro nobis; amor, erga proximum. Fides proprie conjuncta est cum oeconomia Patris: Spes, cum oeconomia Filii: Amor, cum oeconomia Spiritus sancti.... Amor proximo plus prodest, quam fides et spes per se.... Ac Deus non dicitur fides aut spes absolute, amor dicitur.

BENGEL, *Gnomon*, 427

He is not really talking about how long it lasts ... but about its efficacy, in contradistinction to prophecy, etc. in this sense: when all the causes have been considered, these three things are necessary and sufficient; only these three things should stand. These are they; these remain, nothing more.... Faith is in God; hope is for us; love is toward our neighbor. Faith is properly joined with the economy of the Father; hope with the economy of the Son; love with the economy of the Holy Spirit.... Love is more of value to the neighbor than faith and hope in and of themselves.... And God is not called faith or hope in absolute terms, but he *is* called love (1 John 4:8).

We must bear in mind, of course, that the intentions of these two commentaries are as different as their respective literary styles. In his *Annotations*, Melanchthon was aiming primarily to clarify doctrinal points of special importance for Lutheran theology. Hence his interest in making sure his readers understand that Paul's explicit preference for love above faith in this context does not vitiate the crucial Reformation principle of *sola fide*. Bengel's *Gnomon*, by contrast, is less polemically pointed and more exegetically comprehensive. He aims to provide a hermeneutic guide to pastors and even theologians who are struggling to figure out what the Greek text has to say in general.

Given these differences in authorial intentions, we still can distinguish here two very different prose styles: one is "curt," the other is not. The last sentence in the passage written by Melanchthon is over 50 words long. By contrast, Bengel prefers short, aphoristic phrases and avoids subordinating conjunctions: *Fides est in Deum; spes, pro nobis; amor, erga proximum*. There are only ten words here, but none are wasted: three nouns in the nominative case; three corresponding prepositions; three nouns in the accusative case—and the verb. Melanchthon uses subordinating conjunctions frequently, as he constructs his sentences hypotactically: *sicut, ut, tamen, quia, ergo, quia*. Bengel uses no relative pronouns to establish connections between clauses; Melanchthon uses three.

The contrast is illuminating. Melanchthon's style is conducive for what he is trying to accomplish: clarifying a point of doctrine with a clear confutation of the opposing point of view. Bengel's style is not argumentative and not at all transparent, but it is more memorable, pithy, and evocative. No doubt Melanchthon's exegesis was useful for disciples of his who would follow his example and even use his arguments to press doctrinal points with theological opponents. One imagines that Bengel's exegetical "hieroglyphs," as suggestive and as enigmatic as the Scriptures themselves, may have been just the thing to spark a thought in the relatively unformed mind of a seminarian or a veteran pastor preparing yet another sermon or devotion. The substance of Melanchthon's argument may be easy to remember, but Bengel's words are better suited for memorization and quotation than Melanchthon's. Could Bengel be called a second- or third-generation anti-Ciceronian? Perhaps his stylistic choices are indicative in some way of his pietistic tendencies, a subtle (or not-so-subtle) indictment of Melanchthonian orthodoxy.

Cicero in Hell

At no time since the first century AD did Cicero's reputation fare worse than in the nineteenth century. How best to account for his plunging popularity?

One possible cause would be the Romantic disregard for imitation and the privileging of originality and poetic genius so common at this time. As Shelley so memorably puts it in his ode to a skylark:

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from Heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

There is little about Cicero's rhetoric that is "unpremeditated." *Imitatio*, practice, and education are essential ingredients in his recipe for rhetorical success. Hard work and preparation, much study and thoughtfulness, and not a whole lot of "blitheness," one suspects, was what made Cicero Cicero. Furthermore, there is much about Cicero that is deliberately unoriginal. Many of his writings "translate" the ideas of Greek philosophers into the Latin language and contextualize them for a Roman audience. Much of Cicero's rhetorical theory is borrowed from Greek sources like Aristotle and Isocrates. Nor were his gifts as an orator unique; Demosthenes and the other great Attic orators came before him. If the original genius of an artist is the paramount consideration, then it would be hard not to consider Cicero's achievements second-rate, especially when viewed as an epigone to the Greek authors from whom he borrowed so heavily. What had heretofore been considered a healthy, even admirable eclecticism on Cicero's part began to be perceived as much more of a deficit in the nineteenth century.

Although Greek authors were rediscovered during the Renaissance, it was only now that their "originality" really began to be emphasized, while Latin authors, even those considered almost divine in the Renaissance, like Cicero and Virgil, began to be regarded as derivative and inferior in comparison. A turning point in classical scholarship was Friedrich August Wolf's *Prolegomena ad Homerum*, published in 1795. It had been customary for centuries to see Virgil's *Aeneid* as the consummate epic, the climactic, polished culmination of the tradition begun imperfectly by "nodding" Homer, whose poems were often regarded in the eighteenth century as somewhat uncouth and primitive in comparison.¹⁰⁴ The fact that Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* predated Virgil's *Aeneid* was now a decided advantage for the Hellenic prototypes. The opening

104 See Clarke, *Homer's Readers*. The classic treatment of Virgil's legacy in the Middle Ages is Comparetti, *Virgil in the Middle Ages*. For the modern period, see Ziolkowski, *Virgil and the Moderns*. Few serious treatments of Virgil in German appeared until Richard Heinze's in 1903.

words of Wilhelm Siegmund Teuffel's monumental and influential history of Latin literature (first published in 1870) are telling: "The Romans lacked the versatility, many-sidedness, and imaginative power of the Greeks; their eminent qualities are sober and acute thought, and firmness and perseverance of will." These particular qualities, as Teuffel observes, are "decidedly unfavorable to art and literature."¹⁰⁵

Nowhere did Cicero's reputation as a political figure, philosopher, and orator fare worse than in nineteenth-century Germany. We could speculate that this may owe something to the Reformation's impulse in general to privilege original sources, the Scriptures, over ecclesiastical tradition. For many biblical scholars, the *Quelle*, or hypothetical "source," from which the synoptic Gospels must derive their common material, had by now become more interesting than the actual texts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke attested to in existing manuscripts. Working with the historical-critical methodologies pioneered by Johann Salomo Semler, professor at the University of Halle, a number of Protestant theologians in the nineteenth century (the most prominent of them being Ferdinand Christian Baur at Tübingen) began to make the hypothetical sources or the historical background of the Scriptures the subject of their critical inquiry. The unintended but inevitable result of such an emphasis on *Quellenforschung* was a derogation of the reliability of the church's traditional understanding of the Bible. Something similar happened in the field of classical studies, especially in Germany, to the legacy of Cicero. Even though it was widely acknowledged that he represented an important link in the classical tradition, judged from the point of view of originality he was regarded as not nearly so interesting or important as the sources from which he drew.

It could also be suggested that thanks to the growing interest in German identity and its roots in folk culture, it began to seem important to distinguish what it meant to be "German" vis-à-vis other European nation states like France. The interest in documenting the history of Germany as distinct from other European entities is certainly evident during this period. The first volume of the *Monumenta Historiae Germanica* was published in 1826. Its motto indicates clearly the patriotic motivation underlying the ambitious project: *Sanctus amor patriae dat animum*.¹⁰⁶ The nineteenth century also witnessed a remarkable revival of interest in Luther as a seminal figure in the history of a distinctively German *Kultur*, culminating in the "Luther Renaissance" in the early part of the twentieth century. The emphasis upon German uniqueness became

105 Leonhardt, *Latin*, 272. Teuffel had originally set out to study theology, but spent his career teaching the classics at the University of Tübingen.

106 Gooch, *History and Historians in Nineteenth Century*, 66.

especially pronounced in the wake of the Napoleonic wars. In the eighteenth century Frederick the Great had spoken French fluently, and Goethe regarded himself as a cosmopolitan citizen of Europe, but this kind of expansive pan-European perspective was less in evidence in the nineteenth century, as the focus of many Germans began to narrow along more nationalistic lines. The Franco-Prussian War, culminating in the fall of Paris in 1871, and the formation of the German nation state in the same year, sharpened antipathies on both sides. The fact that all things Roman had dominated taste in French art and literature (and even dress) during the last part of the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth (see, for instance, the paintings of Jacques-Louis David), and that French was a Romance language, made it even easier for many Germans to identify with Greek rather than Roman antiquity.

Germany's relationship with ancient Greece in the nineteenth century has been described in dramatic terms by Eliza Butler and others as a kind of subservient obsession to a long-lost idealized civilization:

Nothing could now have arrested the invasion of Germany by the mythical inhabitants of a Greece that never was on sea or land. In noble simplicity and serene greatness they came, just as Winckelmann had seen them. In a rush of mighty movement they were there, for Lessing had endowed them with just enough life to march victoriously into his country. They were there, erecting an absolute standard of perfection, solemn, statuesque and unreal; shrouded in alien beauty, dimmed by the blight of years. Germany fell prostrate before them and kissed the rod wielded by the tyranny of these so-called Greeks.¹⁰⁷

The role of Johann Gottfried Herder in fostering German philhellenism is hard to overestimate.¹⁰⁸ Herder was a prominent Lutheran clergyman (general superintendent and court preacher at Weimar), a student of Hamann, and a mentor of Goethe.¹⁰⁹ Stroh calls him a “real enemy of the Romans” and opines that no “mutterer against Latin (*Lateinmuffel*) in the ranks of the Enlightenment pedagogues had passed such a devastating judgment on Latin as this green-horn (*grünschnäbelige*) Herder, inspired by the Greek muses.”¹¹⁰ Perhaps Herder's Lutheran sensibilities contributed to his love of ancient Greece and his distaste for Rome, “where senators and warriors dwelt of yore, / But now

¹⁰⁷ Butler, *Tyranny of Greece*, 80.

¹⁰⁸ See Valdez, *German Philhellenism*, for a broad overview.

¹⁰⁹ Von Lempick, *Geschichte der deutschen Literaturwissenschaft*, 88 and 91.

¹¹⁰ Stroh, *Latein ist tot*, 258.

the black-coat and the Monsignor." Butler suggests that while "Lessing saw Rome with eyes that were blank with misery; Herder looked at it through the mists of personal irascibility and peevish protestant disapproval."¹¹¹

Asaph Ben-Tov suggests that there are "threads of continuity" if not "straight lines" that connect Melanchthon with Winckelmann and Humboldt:

The mere fact that the great flourishing of Greek "revival" took place within what became the German Classics in mostly Protestant circles, begs at the very least the question of whether a study of Baroque and Enlightenment engagement with Greek antiquity among German Protestants would trace threads of continuity, despite significant changes, between a Lutheran late humanist milieu at the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, and the subsequent two centuries. This may offer some insight in the longue durée "Hellenic" background of Winckelmann, Lessing (himself the son of a Lutheran theologian and pastor), Humboldt, and Goethe.¹¹²

How long exactly are these "threads of continuity"? If one can trace the origins of the philhellenism so prevalent in nineteenth-century Germany to the "outbreak of the Thirty Years War," as Ben-Tov suggests, it should not be all that difficult to make the connection with the Wittenberg reformers a century earlier. Might not negative attitudes toward Cicero, the man and his literary style, owe much, at least indirectly if not directly, to Luther himself?

A great deal of this later German aversion to Cicero may be owing to his close association with oratory and rhetoric. Whether this can be traced to Luther's expressed disdain for *verba* or returns directly to Plato may be impossible to determine, but there was certainly a strong strain of anti-rhetorical sentiment in German thought.¹¹³ The views of Immanuel Kant on the difference between rhetoric and poetry, two contrasting "arts of speech" (with rhetoric, "a deceitful art," occupying a decidedly inferior position), are not untypical:

¹¹¹ Butler, *Tyranny of Greece*, 73.

¹¹² Ben-Tov, *Lutheran Humanists*, 220. Here and elsewhere, Ben-Tov focuses on continuities rather than disruptions: "Contrary to what one might expect, there is no evidence here of a significant pagan/Christian divide in Lutheran understanding of Greek history" (218). (See my review in *LQ*.) Between Luther's discovery "of the beauty of the Old Testament" and "the rein vigorators of this art, Klopstock, Hamann and Herder," Karl Holl (*Cultural Significance*, 124) sees "a steady line" that "moves from Luther to neo-humanism and on to the romantics."

¹¹³ See Fuhrmann. "Die Tradition der Rhetorik-Verachtung," 43–55.

The arts of speech are rhetoric and poetry. Rhetoric is the art of transacting a serious business of the understanding as if it were a free play of the imagination; poetry that of conducting a free play of the imagination as if it were a serious business of the understanding. Thus the orator announces a serious business, and for the purpose of entertaining his audience conducts it as if it were a play with ideas. The poet promises merely an entertaining play with ideas, and yet for the understanding there inures as much as if the promotion of its business had been his one intention.¹¹⁴

In contemporary theology the situation was not far different. That “rhetoric” would actually stand in oppositional relationship to “facts” is assumed in the title of the book that August Friedrich Christian Vilmar, professor of theology at Marburg, published in 1854: *Die Theologie der Tatsachen wider die Theologie der Rhetorik*.¹¹⁵

No doubt, at least in part, because of its traditional association with rhetoric in schools and universities in Germany, the paramount importance of Latin language and literature began to be questioned in the minds of many. Already in the eighteenth century, pedagogues like Johann Matthias Gesner, sometimes called the “father of *Neuhumanismus*,” were dissatisfied with the way Latin was being taught. Johann August Ernesti suggested that the steady preoccupation with oral and written Latin prose and verse composition fostered by the Sturmian approach resulted in a kind of mindless educational process (*stupor paedagogicus*), with detrimental effects on both teachers and students.¹¹⁶ Rather than encouraging students to direct their attention to how best to chase down phraseology from Cicero (*Phrasenjägeri*) to incorporate into their own Latin, proponents of the “New Humanism” focused instead on helping students to read and understand the great works and ideas of ancient thinkers, not just learn their language.¹¹⁷ They did not limit their interest only to the Greek and Roman past but included the study of other cultures (especially German) as well.

Inspired by calls for reform by Johann Gottlieb Fichte and other idealists for a new “system of German national education,” dramatic changes took place in

114 *Critique of Judgment*, transl. Meredith, 184–185, as quoted in Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*, 274–275. For a different assessment, see Stroud, *Kant and the Promise of Rhetoric*.

115 Barth, *Protestant Theology*, 613.

116 Johann August Ernesti, classicist and theologian, became rector of the *Thomasschule* in Leipzig in 1734, succeeding Gesner. He was educated at *Schulpforta* and produced many editions of Greek and Latin authors, including Cicero (Leonhardt, *Latin*, 253).

117 Stroh, *Latin ist tot*, 254.

nineteenth-century German schools.¹¹⁸ The educational reforms of Wilhelm von Humboldt and the development of *Altertumswissenschaft* as a broader, unified field of human study (rather than the more restricted disciplines of Greek and Latin philology) had far-reaching consequences in German universities and elsewhere.

Latin continued to be used in the schools and universities, but it was no longer the predominant focus of interest or scholarship as it had been previously. Gottfried Hermann, professor of eloquence and poetry at the University of Leipzig, had “an excellent style in Latin prose.” For over 20 years without fail he sent to a friend “on New Year’s Eve a set of Latin verses,” in commemoration of his birthday.¹¹⁹ But it was upon his expert knowledge of the fine points of Greek metrics and grammar that his exalted scholarly reputation rested, not his facility with Latin.

The ancient Greeks now occupied center stage in academic and intellectual life in Germany. Martin Bernal and others have suggested that in their efforts to turn Germany into a “New Hellas” after the Napoleonic wars, those who believed that it was possible to establish a kind of racial, not just intellectual or spiritual, lineage between the ancient Greeks and themselves did the entire discipline of the classics a great disservice.¹²⁰ In their zeal to associate themselves with the ancient Greeks, German classical scholars often emphasized the uniqueness of the Hellenic culture as distinct from that of the Greeks’ Mediterranean neighbors, many of whom did not speak an “Indo-Aryan” language, but a Semitic one.

Despite the fact that the Greeks adopted the Phoenician alphabet, borrowed much of their intellectual and religious culture from the Egyptians (according to Herodotus), and made extensive use of Mesopotamian mythology (cf. Hesiod’s *Theogony*), German classicists like Karl Otfried Müller, son of a chaplain to the Prussian army and one of the pioneers of the study of classical mythology, argued that ancient traditions suggesting that the Greeks were

118 Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 121–122. See, in general, Helmreich, *Religious Education in German Schools*, and Paulsen, *German Education*.

119 According to Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship*, vol. 3, 94, Hermann was a colorful lecturer who “was wont to appear in his blue riding-coat and in high boots and spurs” in the classroom. In 1817, Hermann “celebrated the tercentenary of the Reformation in 120 lines of Latin Elegiacs.”

120 Bernal was not the first to bring this perspective to bear on the field of the classics. In his *Black Athena Writes Back*, he acknowledges the pioneering work of Cyrus Gordon and Michael Astour, both of whom tried to link the culture of the ancient Greeks more closely with their Semitic neighbors. Like his intellectual forbears, Bernal met with resistance from some professional classicists.

much indebted to the cultures immediately bordering their own were suspect: "Europe was, and had always been, categorically separate from and superior to Asia and Africa."¹²¹

It is against this background that we should seek to understand the impact of the most notorious anti-Ciceronian in the nineteenth century, Theodor Mommsen, another son of a Lutheran pastor and one of the most respected and prolific classicists of his generation. His *Römische Geschichte*, a monumental undertaking which he never finished, was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1902; it is one of the very few works of non-fiction ever to be given that honor. Mommsen took no pains to conceal his thoroughgoing contempt for Cicero and his "absolute want of political discernment ... the egotism forgetful of its duty and constantly losing sight of the cause":

It is only as a stylist that he shows confidence in himself. In the character of an author, on the other hand, he stands quite as low as in that of a statesman.... He was in fact so thoroughly a dabbler, that it was pretty much a matter of indifference to what work he applied his hand.... [His character] is stale and empty as was ever the soul of a feuilletonist banished from his familiar circles. It is scarcely needful to add that such a statesman and such a *littérateur* could not, as a man, exhibit aught else than a thinly varnished superficiality and heartlessness.... Cicero had no conviction and no passion, he was nothing but an advocate, and not a good one.... The dreadful barrenness of thought in the Ciceronian orations must revolt every reader of feeling and judgment.... [Caesar and other contemporaries] found Cicero's language deficient in precision and chasteness, his jests deficient in liveliness, his arrangement deficient in clearness and articulate division, and above all his whole eloquence wanting in the fire which makes the orator.¹²²

Even though himself a member of the German parliament and personally committed to the liberal politics of his day, Mommsen the ancient historian preferred Caesar to Cicero. He called the former the "creative genius, the realist, and the man of reason, the statesman in the deepest sense of the word."¹²³

¹²¹ Bernal (*Black Athena Writes Back*, 5–7) suggests that even though it became clear to many Germans after the Napoleonic wars that they could never reestablish a third Reich based on military or political might, they still cherished fond hopes that, just like ancient Greece, "with its many squabbling small states but high level of education and culture," Germany might become a "New Hellas."

¹²² Mommsen, *History of Rome*, 4,725–727.

¹²³ Original in Morelle, *Mommsen and Cicero*, 51.

Mommsen was the most famous (and competent) of the anti-Ciceronian historians of the nineteenth century, but he was not the first.¹²⁴ Anticipating many of his conclusions was Wilhelm Drumann, a teacher at Francke's *Pädagogium* in Halle and later professor at Königsberg, who recognized in Cicero's character the following fatal flaws: "excitability, selfishness, cowardice, defects of attention to justice and truth."¹²⁵ Sihler singles out Drumann and his negative bias for special critical attention in the preface to his *Cicero of Arpinum*:

I doubt whether his personal culture could do justice to two things, viz., the technique and art of oratory, and the history and transmission of Greek Philosophy. His work is so deeply permeated by malice and dominated by a programme of depreciation, that it has well been compared with the labored and one-sided pleadings of a prosecuting attorney.¹²⁶

Drumann concludes his study on a rather confused note, declaring that as a result of his historical investigations it was his unbiased conclusion that monarchy is the best form of government. At the same time, however, he admits that as a Prussian he has no choice but to prefer it to all others: "Not against my will but without its involvement, my book is an encomium for monarchy, and I am pleased with the result which I did not seek, which has pressing applicability for me not only to Roman history, since a Prussian, a subject of a Friedrich Wilhelm, can have no other political confession of faith than ... 'monarchy is the greatest.'"¹²⁷

Mommsen enjoyed a considerable degree of scholarly *gravitas* which may account for the fact that negative views like his on Cicero were so widely accepted in his own and subsequent generations.¹²⁸ Or, it may simply be that his preference for monarchical rule fit the mood of many Germans at the time. Friedrich Engels, born to a wealthy, pietistic family in Barmen, and

124 See Altman, "Cicero and Fourth Triumvirate," 217–219, on the influential views of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel on this score. Hegel believed that the demise of the Republic was inevitable (it "could not longer exist in Rome"). He dismissed the conspirators against Caesar, including Cicero, as possessed of a "remarkable hallucination" that if only Caesar "were out of the way, the Republic would *ipso facto* be restored." And he was sure that "judged by the great scope of history," Caesar "did the right."

125 Drumann's history of the fall of the Roman republic was quite massive (six volumes).

126 Sihler, *Cicero of Arpinum*, vi.

127 Original in Merolle, *Mommsen and Cicero*, 19.

128 Weil, *2000 Jahre*, p. 18, in what could be fairly described as a *reductio ad Hitlerum*, argues that there is "a straight line" leading from the poets who called for German unity and liberation from France, "through the philosophers and historians" (including Mommsen), "to the dictatorial regimes of our century."

co-author of *The Communist Manifesto*, refers to Cicero, the spokesman for conservative, aristocratic Roman values, as “the most contemptible scoundrel in history.”¹²⁹ The playwright George Bernard Shaw used Mommsen as a source for his play *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898).¹³⁰ The title of A.F. Witley’s 1939 biography of Cicero, *The Tremulous Hero*, probably owes something to the depiction of Cicero’s character by Mommsen and others as selfish, wavering, and cowardly. As late as 1946, Walter Rüegg could call Mommsen’s historic disparagement of so central a figure as Cicero a “problem” for German cultural history. In his own generation, Rüegg observed, Cicero was “virtually unknown in Germany,” and if he was known, he was “rejected as a representative of a liberal humanity.”¹³¹

The influence of Mommsen’s negative views of Cicero on such prominent ancient historians of the twentieth century as Sir Ronald Syme (author of *The Roman Revolution*, published in 1939) is certainly clear. William Altman observes: “Syme’s Cicero remains a recognizable avatar of his great predecessor’s two-faced *Achselträger* (‘opportunist’).”¹³² While discounted by many scholars of Republican Rome today, Mommsen’s characterizations of Cicero may still be seen reflected in popular culture. In Colleen McCullough’s 2002 novel, *The October Horse*, Cicero is described as “vacillating” and “vainglorious.”¹³³ In the HBO mini-series entitled simply “Rome,” Cicero is played as “a sniveling toad” by the actor David Bamber, while Caesar is portrayed quite positively.¹³⁴

Cicero continued to have his defenders in Italy, as might be expected. Indeed, one suspects that the animus against Cicero could never have found the

129 Parenti, *Assassination of Julius Caesar*, 86. Unlike Eugen Carl Dühring, whose “people’s school of the future” was to replace Greek and Latin with mathematics and other practical subjects, Engels considered the study of ancient languages to be an invaluable “lever” which gave students “the opportunity of rising above the narrow national standpoint” (Wilson, *To the Finland Station*, 213).

130 Weintraub, *Bernard Shaw*, 71.

131 Rüegg, *Cicero und der Humanismus*, viii. In the last decades a great deal more scholarly attention has been paid to Cicero in German. See, e.g., Gelzer, *Cicero: Ein biographischer Versuch*; Habicht, *Cicero der Politiker*; Fuhrmann, *Cicero und die Römische Republik* (Fuhrmann also translated all of Cicero’s speeches into German); Leonhardt, *Ciceros Kritik der philosophischen Schulen*; Stroh, *Cicero: Redner, Staatsmann, Philosoph*; and Schuller, *Cicero oder der letzte Kampf um die Republik*.

132 Altman, “Cicero and Fourth Triumvirate,” 198ff.

133 McCullough, *October Horse*, 577.

134 This discussion draws on my review of Merolle, *Mommsen and Cicero in c.j.* The phrase “sniveling toad” is that of Timothy Caspar in “Philosopher Statesman.”

same kind of support in Cicero's native land that it did in Germany, precisely because it *was* his native land. Ferdinand Gregorovius, a German historian of medieval Rome who lived for many years in Italy and was even made an honorary citizen of Rome, wrote in his *Diario Romano* (1862): "Mommsen's work is remarkable for scholarship, for critical and destructive acumen, but it is more a libel than a history." He suggests that Mommsen, like Richard Wagner, was "ill with megalomania." During Mommsen's trip to Sardinia in 1877, at a dinner held in his honor, the great *Ciceromastix* of his day "gave out incautious, unfair, contemptuous judgments," which led the newspaper *Avvenire di Sardegna* to characterize Mommsen as *invidioso tedesco*. Mommsen himself, in turn, complained that he had had to do battle with the *camorra, da me combattuta*.¹³⁵

In England, the novelist Anthony Trollope, who offered a sympathetic treatment of Cicero in his biography (1880), acknowledged that his positive views of the Roman orator were not held by many of his contemporaries: "I may say with truth that my book has sprung from love of the man, and from a heartfelt admiration of his virtues and his conduct as well as of his gifts. I must acknowledge that in discussing his character with men of letters, as I have been prone to do, I have found none quite to agree with me." To those, like Mommsen, who would question the ancient Roman's patriotism, sincerity, and courage, Trollope declares of Cicero "that as an orator, a rhetorician, an essayist, and a correspondent he was supreme, that as a statesman he was honest, as an advocate fearless, and as a governor pure—that he was a man whose intellectual part always dominated that of the body, that in taste he was excellent, in thought correct and enterprising, and that in language he was perfect." Trollope concludes by reprising the old notion that Cicero was an *anima naturaliter Christiana*:

But there was a humanity in Cicero, a something almost of Christianity, a stepping forward out of the dead intellectualities of Roman life into moral perceptions, into natural affections, into domesticity, philanthropy and conscious discharge of duty, which do not seem to have been as yet fully appreciated. To have loved his neighbor as himself before the teaching of Christ was much for a man to achieve; and that he did this is what I claim for Cicero.¹³⁶

135 For the quotations above, see Merolle, *Mommsen and Cicero*, 35.

136 As quoted in Kennedy, "Cicero's Oratorical and Rhetorical Legacy," 498.

Cicero Americanus and the American Adam

It is possible that the decline in reputation of rhetoric in general and Cicero in particular was influenced at least in part by Peter Ramus, a student, ironically enough, of that great devotee of Cicero, Johann Sturm. Even though Ramus himself praised Cicero's oratorical skills in his *Ciceronianus* of 1557 and published commentaries on his consular orations, he challenged some of the basic tenets of his rhetorical theory in *Brutinae quaestiones in Oratorem Ciceronis* (1547). Critically, Ramus separated invention and arrangement from the five traditional categories of rhetoric and assigned them to the discipline of dialectic. Style and delivery were to be considered under the aegis of rhetoric. These and other of his ideas proved quite popular and spread quickly to England (see, e.g., Gabriel Harvey's *Ciceronianus* of 1577).¹³⁷

Scholars following the lead of Walter Ong have argued that "Ramism" represents a sea change in how rhetoric was regarded in general and led ultimately to the relatively low degree of respect which it enjoyed in the following centuries.¹³⁸ It may be owing in part to Ramus's momentous recategorization of elements traditionally assigned to the study of rhetoric that the word "rhetoric" is still today used by many synonymously with "verbiage," or even to mean the opposite of "truth." (The adjective "merely" can be safely appended to it.) Eventually, questions of "style" and "delivery" were assigned to elocution programs, communication and theater departments, and debate clubs, but rarely given the kind of high status assigned to writing and its instruction or the study of logic. What is of special interest to us here is that "Ramism" was embraced enthusiastically by Puritans who came to America in the sixteenth century. There were copies of Ramus's writings on the Mayflower.¹³⁹

Unlike the Jesuit and Franciscan missionaries in Latin America, many of the Europeans who first settled in eastern North America (the Pilgrims arrived in 1620) did not come to America in order to convert the natives and then possibly return home. Because they were ostracized in Europe and were

137 Ramus himself "always insisted that rhetoric and dialectic had to be studied together" (Mack, "Ramus and Ramism," 8). In Germany, Ramus's rhetorical innovations were slower to catch on, sometimes only in conjunction with Melanchthon's theories (Philippo-Ramism); see Knox, "Order, Reason and Oratory," 72.

138 Ong, *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue*. Ong's ideas have since been challenged by Brian Vickers (*In Defense of Rhetoric*, 475–457) and others. As Peter Mack ("Ramus and Ramism," 8), observes: "Above all, we must not succumb to a critique of Ramus like the late Father Walter Ong's, which lumps together Ramus' own alleged failings with the excesses of his followers."

139 Mandrou, *From Humanism to Science*, 177.

unable there to pursue their controversial religious beliefs and practices as they wished, the Puritans came to North America in order to achieve for themselves the civic security and societal perfection that they had been unable to realize in Europe. Presented with a novel set of opportunities made possible only because they were in a new land, these first settlers of New England set out to recreate themselves afresh in America. Behind them lay the constrictive European past, including the daunting intellectual legacy of Greco-Roman antiquity (and Cicero); ahead of them there stretched a beckoning, boundless wilderness consisting only of untamed nature and “savage” Indians, an area of limitless potentiality that cried out to be named, farmed, and civilized.

From this point of view, it is not surprising perhaps that so many of these American settlers and their descendants should have come to consider the study of an ancient language like Latin almost entirely a waste of time. Benjamin Rush, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, declared with some vehemence: “I often look back upon the four years I spent ... in learning the Latin and Greek languages.... I should wish the memory of those years blotted out of my mind forever.”¹⁴⁰ William Livingston, newspaper editor and later governor of New Jersey, argued that the new country needed practical know-how, not traditional book-learning: “The most intimate acquaintance with the classics, will not remove our oaks; nor a taste for the *Georgics* cultivate our lands. Many of our young people are knocking their heads against the *Iliad*, who should employ their hands in clearing our swamps and draining our marshes.”¹⁴¹ By the time Andrew Jackson became president (1829), it had become quite chic to celebrate “the unlettered man of the West, the nursling of the wilds,” and to praise those like the President, who were “little versed in books, unconnected by science with the tradition of the past.”¹⁴² There were eight men serving in Jackson’s cabinet without a college degree.

Neither Cicero nor some other figure from the Greco-Roman historical or legendary past, but the biblical character of Adam, was identified as the iconic figure representing the essence of American identity by R.W.B. Lewis in his influential book *The American Adam*.¹⁴³ Lewis was a historian of ideas who suggested that in nineteenth-century America “the image contrived to embody the most fruitful contemporary ideas was that of the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new

140 Reinhold, *Classica Americana*, 131.

141 Ibid., 36.

142 Winterer, *Culture of Classicism*, 46.

143 In what follows I am indebted in general to Shields, *The American Aeneas*.

history.”¹⁴⁴ The myth Lewis chose to illustrate his point was the biblical story of Adam in Eden. As he explains:

The new habits to be engendered on the new American scene were suggested by the image of a radically new personality, the hero of the new adventure: an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. It is not surprising, in a Bible-reading generation, that the new hero (in praise or disapproval) was most easily identified with Adam before the Fall. Adam was the first, the archetypal, man. His moral position was prior to experience, and in his very newness he was fundamentally innocent. The world and history lay all before him. And he was the type of creator, the poet par excellence, creating language itself by naming the elements of the scene about him. All this and more were contained in the image of the American as Adam.¹⁴⁵

Focusing on a critical period in American history, the forty years just before the Civil War, and concentrating on New England and the Atlantic seaboard, Lewis pointed out that thinkers like the naturalist Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson, author of “The American Scholar,” were deliberately breaking intellectual ties with Europe and working hard to formulate a distinctive idea of what it meant to be American. These and other self-consciously American thinkers insisted that “the old sources of intellectual excitement seem to be well-nigh exhausted.” Instead, they sought new, “American” ways of thinking and a national literature, in the words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “altogether shaggy and unshorn, that shall shake the earth, like a herd of buffaloes thundering over the prairies.”¹⁴⁶

No doubt the very nature of the physical environment in which the Americans found themselves, both initially and later, helped to shape this perspective. It has been suggested that it was the idea of the frontier of this strange, wild, vast land, stretching out farther west than the Pilgrims could ever have

144 Lewis, *American Adam*, 1. In this connection it is hard not to think of the many American landscapes painted during this period by Thomas Cole (and others of the Hudson River School) that depict a lonely individual gazing out a river valley or a mountain range, devoid of any other sign of civilization.

145 Lewis, *American Adam*, 5.

146 Longfellow, “Kavangh,” 116.

imagined when they first landed in Massachusetts, that played a formative role in the construction of a sense of American identity.¹⁴⁷

It is instructive to contrast Adam with Cicero in this regard. The first man created never went to any sort of school in Eden or elsewhere. There was nothing for him to learn other than what he could see all around him in his garden. Cicero, by contrast, spent a great deal of his early life studying, not only in Rome but also in Greece. Adam was a man of few words. There are just a few sentences in the first chapters of Genesis that are attributed to him. Cicero, in comparison, was a veritable fount of words. And that copious verbal supply, on behalf of all sorts of causes, not excluding his own personal interests, was held against him by some Americans: "Was Cicero, that everlasting word-monger, letter-writer, and self-praiser, ever natural save in his megalomania and his whining?" asked a *New York Times* editorialist in 1922.¹⁴⁸ A popular American college textbook that calls Cicero "one of the master minds of western civilization" also points out he had a reputation for being "shallow, vain, superficial, unoriginal, hypocritical, stuffy, pompous."¹⁴⁹ Adam did sin, at least once, but he wasted few words in the process. Cicero's sin was to write so many candid letters and not insist that they be burnt upon reading.

Unlike Adam, whom artists most often depict in his naked glory in a garden, Cicero is always represented in art as clothed, in the Roman toga. Cicero is a citizen, a virtuous participant in an advanced urban environment (cities are not associated with virtue in the early chapters of Genesis). We know from his letters that Cicero missed his beloved city terribly when he had to leave Rome. Unlike Adam, who, at least before Eve's creation, was all by himself in Eden, Cicero was anything but a loner. He was a son and a husband and a father. He was an active member of a political party and the Roman Senate. Adam, by contrast, in his isolated rural splendor, was more like a child than an adult, a blank slate facing an equally blank future. He had no culture that he inherited, no extended family that he had to care for, nothing at all to look back upon with regret or longing, and he faced a future that was not predetermined but filled only with the purest potentiality.

147 The thesis first presented by Frederick Jackson Turner at the World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 in Chicago, that the idea of a frontier helped to shape much of the restless, optimistic nature of America, certainly corresponds neatly with Lewis's notion of the American Adam.

148 Rolfe, *Cicero*, 4.

149 "In a way, Cicero was all of these things—he was after all, a human being, and he has told us too much about himself for us to make a hero of him" (MacKendrick and Howe, *Classics in Translation*, vol. 2, 100).

The narrative of Genesis starts out “in the beginning,” but Cicero’s story is situated in the middle of Roman history, at a critical juncture, but not the outset. The youthful Adam, by contrast, finds himself in a garden setting that is only a few days older than he, while Cicero is not only a Roman with centuries of Roman history behind him but also an ardent admirer of the ancient Greeks. A keen sense of historical perspective is characteristic of ancient Greek thought. As Bernard Knox has observed, the Greeks thought of progress as a matter of “backing into the future.”¹⁵⁰ Cicero, too, in his life and thought, went forward facing backwards, as it were. Since he and other ancients could know nothing about the future, it made sense to them to think about proceeding ahead by looking behind them, towards the past, because the past contains all that we can and do know. The future is guesswork, and the present trickles through our fingers before we can grasp it. As Stephanie Kurczyk has pointed out, Cicero put a great deal of effort into reconstructing his own past, constantly restaging, as it were, the story of his life, especially in his letters.¹⁵¹ Romans like Cicero “envisaged life within a long, dense corridor of meaningful history,” while, according to Lewis, “the American myth saw life and history as just beginning.”¹⁵²

For many Americans, Cicero was little more than a symbol of a burdensome European past with which they often had a problematic relationship at best. In the first half of the nineteenth century we find key figures such as Noah Webster announcing that “American glory begins at the dawn” and prescribing emancipation from Europe, its history and its habits, as the best remedy for national intellectual health.¹⁵³ American literature of the time features heroes like James Fenimore Cooper’s Natty Bumpo, a prototypical American, “a self-reliant young man who does seem to have sprung from nowhere, and whose characteristic pose, to employ Tocqueville’s words, was ‘the solitary stance in the presence of Nature and God.’”¹⁵⁴ There were many Americans of this period who shared Henry David Thoreau’s views of England as an old man “traveling with a great deal of baggage, trumpery which has accumulated from long housekeeping, which he has not the courage to burn.”¹⁵⁵ Dismissing everything connected with the trappings of conventional civilized life or the traditional

150 See Knox, *Backing into the Future*.

151 Kurczyk, *Cicero und die Inszenierung*.

152 Lewis, *American Adam*, 5.

153 *Ibid.*, 72.

154 *Ibid.*, 91.

155 *Ibid.*, 22. Thoreau was so devoted to his rejection of everything connected with civilization that he even refused the gift of a door mat at Walden Pond, just in case he would get used to shaking it out every morning.

rituals of established religion, Thoreau propounded a new, unfettered natural life. In the second chapter of *Walden Pond* he writes: "I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things which I did."¹⁵⁶ Emerging from this period, too, is that most "American" of American poets, Walt Whitman, whose friend John Burroughs said he had something about him "primitive and Adamic that might have belonged to the first man," and who called himself a "chanter of Adamic songs."¹⁵⁷ Whitman's supreme lack of interest in the classical past is evident in the following verses from *Song of the Exposition*:

Come Muse Migrate from Greece and Ionia
 Cross out please those immensely overpaid accounts,
 That matter of Troy and Achilles' wrath, and Aeneas', Odysseus'
 wanderings,
 Placard "Removed" and "To Let" on the rocks of your snowy Parnassus....
 For know a better, fresher, busier sphere, a wide, untried domain awaits,
 demands you.¹⁵⁸

There were no indigenous peoples, obviously, in the paradise into which Adam, the first man, was placed. There were only animals and trees, one man and his God and nobody else (at least until Eve put in her appearance). The Puritans, too, continued to see themselves as "separate" in the new world as they had been in the old; they maintained their genetic and cultural identities intact for the most part. They imagined themselves to be strangers in a strange land and did not see this new environment as a "melting pot" but rather as a place to which they could transplant their own reformed culture.¹⁵⁹ By contrast, syncretism was a central characteristic of the religion of the Romans. They made room in their ever expanding pantheon of gods for a wide variety of deities from the cultures they conquered and absorbed, such as the Egyptian Isis, the Persian Mithras, and the Olympian deities of the Greeks. Cicero played a pivotal role in translating the intellectual legacy of an alien culture, that of

¹⁵⁶ Thoreau, *Walden*, 59.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 47.

¹⁵⁸ As quoted in McWilliams, *American Epic*, 231.

¹⁵⁹ There were Moravian missionaries who did extensive work with the Cherokees (McClinton, *Moravian Springplace Mission*), but Lutheran settlers in North America for the most part did not devote much effort to interacting with native Americans. Granquist (*Lutherans in North America*, 103) points out that with the exception of John Campanius Holm in New Sweden, there were no Lutheran pastors who "made more than a passing attempt to reach the Native Americans."

the Greeks, to late republican Rome. He probably was himself an initiate in the Eleusinian Mysteries (see *De legibus* 2.14). One suspects that for the Puritans and many other Europeans who settled in North America, the indigenous people were simply absent, as though they had blended invisibly into the vast natural landscapes with hardly a trace, indistinguishable from the forests that had to be cut down or the wildlife that had to be killed. In fact, the Native Americans did end up being systematically eliminated from the world of the white settlers, either in mass deportations or by mass slaughter. Native American languages (with the exception of place names) have not been assimilated in any significant way into American culture except as markers of “the Other.”

Also, and this difference is of the greatest importance, Cicero was a pagan. The iconic figure of Adam is, of course, biblical. Critical of the church and society they had chosen to leave behind, many of the first European settlers of New England drew exclusively on the Bible for inspiration for every aspect of their own, rigorously pious daily lives. They stressed the importance of repentance and conversion, the possibility for redemption and a new life. Theologically speaking, one’s past could be erased. No matter how guilty, the contrite sinner could stand before God as one who had been declared innocent, like Adam before the fall into sin, a *tabula rasa*.

For the Puritans, biblical religion was often seen as entirely antithetical to Greco-Roman paganism and its heritage. Christianity was placed into a starkly binary relationship with ancient paganism by the learned New England divine Cotton Mather, who rejected the pagan Muses as “no better than harlots” (in his *Manuductio ad Ministerium* of 1726). A Congregational minister who was later to become President of Yale, Timothy Dwight, blamed the study of the classics (in particular, the myths) for promoting immorality; he discouraged the teaching of Homer on Monday, lest, in their preparation for Greek class, students be obliged to read the pagan epic on the day before, Sunday.¹⁶⁰

The earliest Lutherans in America, many of whom settled in Delaware, New York, and Pennsylvania, were not so very different from their Anglo-American neighbors in any of these respects. They too, we discover, could cultivate a decided indifference to the classics and a distaste for the kind of rigorous, liberal arts education which they had left behind in Europe. The influential American Lutheran educator, Heinrich Melchior Mühlberg, for instance, who had himself learned Latin thoroughly before entering the University of Göttingen and later taught at the *Franckesche Stiftung* in Halle, was not an enthusiastic advocate of the traditional liberal arts once he came to Pennsylvania. When a schoolmaster there requested that Mühlberg teach him Latin, he was

160 Winterer, *Culture of Classicism*, 15.

encouraged instead to refer “to his own heart and to the primary roots of true conversion,” concentrating not on Latin, but on the Beatitudes, “concerning poverty of spirit, mourning, purity of heart, hunger and thirst, etc.”¹⁶¹ Even though he was the beneficiary himself of just such a traditional classical education, Mühlenberg spoke strongly against the establishment of a Lutheran *Gymnasium* in Philadelphia and advocated instead for “practical schools [*Realschulen*] in which physical and spiritual powers are cultivated.” These kinds of schools “would probably be more necessary and useful for the furtherance of temporal and eternal welfare.”¹⁶² He felt that such an education as the Wittenberg reformers advocated was “incongruent with the Christian faith” and neglected “the rule and prescription of the supreme Lord, ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God.’”¹⁶³ Mühlenberg wielded a great deal of influence, and the educational model that he preferred, the *Realschule* of Halle, was “considered by the Ministerium as the ideal pattern for further schools.”¹⁶⁴

Like the Puritans and other groups who before them had left Europe to come to America in order to avoid religious persecution, many of the Lutherans who left Germany for the sake of religious convictions in the nineteenth century (sometimes referred to as “old Lutherans,” “neo-Lutherans,” or “confessional Lutherans”) had separatist tendencies. Rather than acknowledge the union of Lutheran and Reformed church bodies in Prussia beginning in 1817 during the reign of Friedrich Wilhelm III (the so-called “Prussian Union”), which deliberately downplayed doctrinal differences (especially those having to do with the question of the real presence in the Eucharist), some Lutherans disobeyed the edict and emigrated. Johannes Andreas August Grabau, educated at the University of Halle and pastor in Erfurt, was jailed twice for refusing to use the Prussian Union’s liturgical *Agende*. With other pastors and congregation members he emigrated to New York and founded what came to be known as “The Buffalo Synod.”¹⁶⁵

Once they arrived in America, such Lutherans were just as committed as the Puritans had been to maintaining their separateness, in this case, from other American Protestants, as well, of course, as from Roman Catholics. These Lutheran immigrants were determined, for instance, to uphold their distinctive doctrine of the real presence of Christ’s body and blood, “in, with, and under

161 *Notebook of Colonial Clergyman*, edd. Tappert and Doberstein, 132, as quoted in Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 155.

162 Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 156.

163 *Ibid.*, 156.

164 Spaeth, *Documentary History*, 39, as quoted in Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 156.

165 Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 176–178.

the bread and wine” in the Eucharist. They also were committed to preserving strict adherence to distinctively Lutheran articles of faith such as the Augsburg Confession. Indeed, the yardstick, if you will, for measuring the degree of one’s commitment to the confessional documents collected in “The Book of Concord” (1580) came to be whether the confessional statements were true, *quatenus* (“only insofar as”) or *quia* (“because”) they expressed the truths of the Scriptures themselves. An unqualified (*quia*) subscription to the unaltered Augsburg Confession was a mark of the most rigorously Lutheran of Lutherans in America.

By now the Latinate word “confessional” had almost entirely lost the sense of “risky speech” that it once may have had. In a development removed very far indeed from its original denotation, “confessional” as applied to Lutheran individuals and church bodies came practically to mean *not* speaking in the company of others. “Marking and avoiding” (Rom. 16:17) those with whom there were doctrinal disagreements, according to this line of reasoning, was the “best witness,” but it was now quite often a silent confession, not verbal. By participating in worship in a Reformed church (“unionism”), or even a less rigorous Lutheran church, Lutherans might give the impression that they did not find their doctrinal differences to be all that critical. By not practicing pulpit and altar fellowship with others, a “confessional” Lutheran could send a message—silently.¹⁶⁶ Silence, of course, has its own eloquent power, and it can be risky, too. At a critical point after his arrest and before his crucifixion, Jesus chose to keep silent (Matt. 26:63). But silence surely was not the quality that “the real German Cicero” found most emulable in the great Roman rhetor.¹⁶⁷

As far as the cultivation of the classical languages among the confessional American Lutherans is concerned, it should be observed that even at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, the redoubtable C.F.W. Walther, himself an ardent advocate of the study of Latin and Cicero, as we have seen, used to refer to the mandatory study of the ancient languages, somewhat humorously and perhaps a bit dismissively, as “the Court of the Gentiles.” Important as authors as Cicero might be for preliminary studies, they had no business in the inner

166 As Werner Elert, (*Eucharist and Church Fellowship*, 182) puts it: “By his partaking of the Sacrament in a church a Christian declares that the confession of that church is his confession. Since a man cannot at the same time hold two differing confessions, he cannot communicate in two churches of differing confessions. If anyone does this nevertheless, he denies his own confession, or has none at all.”

167 No doubt this separatist tendency accounts, in part, for the countless Lutheran church bodies, some quite small, that emerged in America over the years, despite many pan-Lutheran efforts. See my discussion in “*Parrhesia*, Confession, and Confessionalism,” 11–15.

sanctum of the theological curriculum, “the holy of holies,” but must remain forever propaedeutic, in a subordinate role to central studies such as dogmatics. That such an exclusion of the classical languages from what is most central to the theological educational enterprise would soon lead to their exclusion from the less central domains as well was probably inevitable. What exactly Walther himself meant with this comment is unclear. According to J.P. Koehler, an appreciative if not uncritical student of Walther’s: “Many of his students misunderstood this to mean that the only purpose of such study was to prepare the student for the reading of the Bible in the original tongues and of the Latin church fathers.” Koehler also suggests that there was a common failure to appreciate properly Luther’s comparison of the ancient languages to scabbards in which the sword of the Spirit is sheathed or jewel cases that are to house precious stones. There seem to have been many students (and possibly faculty) at Concordia Seminary and elsewhere who took this to mean that language study was merely a means to an end. But Luther himself, as Koehler observes, viewed language and its study quite differently: “He was not a pedantic scholar, but the artist and poet whose lines and colors and metaphors are true life, and to him language was life.”¹⁶⁸

With the rapid growth of the Missouri Synod in the second half of the nineteenth century (by 1897, fifty years after its founding, the synod consisted of almost 2,000 congregations and over 1,600 schools with almost 90,000 students “served by 894 teaching pastors and 781 teachers”), it became imperative to establish a “dedicated teachers’ seminary.”¹⁶⁹ It was Walther’s desire that these prospective teachers, along with future pastors, would continue to be classically educated, as they had been in the past. He wrote to the founder of the new teachers’ seminary in Addison, Illinois, Johann Christoph Wilhelm Lindemann: “It is highly desirable that we have on the faculty of our teachers’ seminary a classically trained man who can read the journals containing divine wisdom in the Latin language and test them according to the original text of the word of God. In fact, this is in many aspects a relative necessity.”¹⁷⁰ Lindemann was not himself the beneficiary of a *Gymnasium* education and had only gone to the Hannover Teachers Seminary for six months before beginning to teach school in Baltimore. The only school which Christian August Thomas Selle, Lindemann’s associate at the new institution in Addison, had ever attended before beginning to teach (in his early teens) was “his village school near

168 Koehler, *History of Wisconsin Synod*, 138.

169 Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 188.

170 Ibid., 190.

Hamburg.”¹⁷¹ It should not have surprised Walther that Latin was left out of the required curriculum at the new school.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Latin was still studied by over half of public high school students in America, especially those planning to go on to college, but enrollments plummeted dramatically in the second half of the century, especially after the passage of the National Defense Education Act in 1958.¹⁷² By the end of the twentieth century, the venerable language of Cicero was no longer required of American students attending public or private schools or colleges with only a few exceptions.¹⁷³ According to Modern Language Association statistics published in February 2015, enrollments in Greek and Latin in colleges and universities across the United States have declined from 52,484 in 2009 to 40,109 in 2013, a drop of nearly 25%.¹⁷⁴ Northwestern College in Watertown, Wisconsin, first established in the 1860s, has long since closed its doors. As it stands now, in the opening decades of the twenty-first century, prospective pastors in American Lutheran church bodies and others may still be required to learn Greek and Hebrew, but Latin is no longer a requirement for those preparing to enter the ministry any more than it is considered necessary (or is even recommended) for those planning to enter any other profession, such as law or medicine.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 190.

¹⁷² Kitchell, “Teaching of Latin in Schools,” makes this observation.

¹⁷³ Even in American high schools where Latin is still being taught today, Cicero’s presence can no longer be taken for granted. Caesar has replaced Cicero in the Advanced Placement Latin Reading List as the only required prose author.

¹⁷⁴ Crane, “Bad News for Latin,” 1.

Epilogue

In the preceding pages, we have traced the outlines of a long and complex cultural story, the intertwined legacy of Cicero and Luther, extending into the twentieth century. As we have seen, Cicero occupied a prestigious place throughout much of European and American history, but such a highly elevated respect as he once enjoyed can certainly no longer be taken for granted. One question remains: What are the future prospects, if any, in Europe and America for Cicero and the Latin language that he was so instrumental in shaping? And will the destiny of Cicero and the classics ever be linked again with that of Christianity (and Lutheranism) in any sort of meaningful and vital way, particularly in the educational realm?

In Europe it has always been fairly easy to see the connection between the present and the Greek and Roman past. Unlike Americans who have to get on a plane and fly for hours to reach the ancient sites, Europeans have been accustomed for centuries to finding Roman remains quite literally in their own backyards. Will the language of Cicero be at the center of whatever one may think that European cultural identity is going to be in the years to come, if it will even be possible to speak of a single such identity at all?¹

In recent years, there have been serious efforts made to save Latin in Europe, including proposals to have Latin counted as one of the official languages of the European Union.² There are 24 languages, “official and working,” now recognized by the European Union, including Estonian, Irish, Latvian, and Maltese, but Latin is not one of them. One of the main objections to such a proposal, it is easy to imagine, is that Latin is a “dead” language, claimed as a primary language by nobody. When it is still studied, the reason for learning the ancient language is mostly for reading purposes, not for direct communication. Any attempt to resurrect Latin is usually viewed as a quixotic exercise, therefore, doomed to failure by the realities of contemporary political configurations. Furthermore, the inevitable association of Latin with the ancient Roman empire conjures up unfortunate images of hegemonic, colonial discourse that contradict dreams of national autonomy, aspirations to universal

1 In his provocative little study, *Bildung*, Manfred Fuhrmann argues that it would be hard to imagine what European culture would be without its two most formative elements, the Bible and the classics, playing a substantial role.

2 See IJsewijn and Sacré, “Ultimate Efforts to Save Latin,” 51–66.

democracy, and claims to particular cultural identities.³ Many regard the cultivation of Latin as an elitist exercise in domination, associated as the language is with a notoriously patriarchal empire. Even the idea that Latin might be of some practical importance when it comes to reading historical documents can be called into question. Is it really practical to go to such pains to learn Latin for reading purposes only, if the most important historical and literary works have already been translated and are readily available in modern language versions or by using sophisticated translation software?

In some respects, Latin does indeed resemble other languages that could be described as “dead” or extinct, like Egyptian hieroglyphics, ancient Sumerian, or Tocharian. These linguistic cadavers are studied exclusively by specialists who would never dream of trying to speak them or to teach others to do so. Even though once the languages of great civilizations, their influence since the time of their historic flourishing is now decidedly on the wane. But the case of Latin in Europe is somewhat different. It is the “mother language” of a number of modern European languages, not only genetically speaking but also in terms of its use as a linguistic paradigm. The admirable consistency of Latin proved irresistible to grammarians and lexicographers in the early modern period who wanted to elevate the status of their own vernacular languages. Latin influenced the vocabulary of many modern European languages, as well as their spelling and grammar.⁴

Classical Latin has been pronounced dead many times in its long history before now, but such pronouncements have invariably proven to be premature. Latin was in a perilous position in the centuries following the fall of the Roman Empire in the West, but it was resurrected, thanks to the efforts of one influential political leader, Charlemagne, and his coterie of dedicated scholars. In the seventh and eighth centuries, public knowledge of classical Latin was far less wide spread than it is today in modern Europe, but its fortunes changed, and it went on to become the *lingua franca* of Europe. Some of the most important scientific treatises of the modern era were written in Latin, such as Isaac Newton’s *Philosophiae naturalis principia mathematica* (1687) or Carl Linnaeus’s botanical writings. (Linnaeus was thoroughly fluent in Latin,

3 When Latin was eliminated from the first year of the *lycée* curriculum in France, one of the arguments for cutting it was that the language of the Romans represented “an obstacle to democratization” (Waquet, “Social Status,” 380).

4 Witness the aversion in modern English to the split infinitive or the double negative or our learned respelling of words like “doubt” and “indict.”

a language he learned as a child at home even before Swedish).⁵ Latin was an official language in entire countries (Poland and Hungary) until the middle of the nineteenth century. There was even a Latin newspaper published in Hungary, *beginning* in 1721.⁶ Long after the language reforms of Vatican II, there have continued to be strong pressures within the Roman Catholic church to celebrate the Mass in Latin. To this very day, Vatican pronouncements are still published in Latin, and there are numerous classes and societies in Europe that actively promote the practice of spoken Latin. There is even a radio news service, *Nuntii Latini*, in Finland, and an on-line Latin newspaper, *Ephemeris*, started in Poland. The Latin summer workshop *Aestiva Romae Latinitas* run by Father Reginald Foster beginning in 1985 (on the Janiculan Hill in Rome) proved to be quite popular and continued to be offered for years.

It is also true that Ciceronian Latin was for centuries the language of elites (the English word “vernacular” comes from the Latin word for “slave”). The magisterial reformers chose to write in Latin in part because of its perceived prestige. But it should be pointed out that European vernaculars like English or Spanish were (and are) hardly neutral, classless, vehicles for communication. Latin was never a language for the unlearned, it is true, but it was not necessarily more heavily freighted with the opprobrious connotations of oppression than any other major European language has been. Writing for the *New York Times*, Aatish Taseer (“How English Ruined Indian Literature”) complains of how difficult it is in a country as deeply influenced by the English language as his has been to become a serious writer of the Indian language. He calls the “round-about journey back to India” he was forced to make in order to rediscover his own linguistic roots “a shameful experience” that produced “feelings of irrelevance and inauthenticity.”⁷

As to the idea that much of the Latin heritage of Europe has already been translated (or could easily be translated in the future), it is important to recognize that of the Latin produced in the centuries following Charlemagne until the present that survives, only a tiny fraction has ever been translated. These works include not only scholarly works but also poems, sermons, newspaper articles, letters, diplomatic exchanges, etc., from all the countries of Europe,

5 His father, Nils Ingemarsson, was a Lutheran minister who adopted his Latinate last name in honor of a linden tree that grew on the family property.

6 As late as the 1950s, it was possible for someone who was not a professional classicist, like C.S. Lewis, to correspond extensively with two Italian priests using Latin. It was a language that was not the correspondents' first, but which they each knew quite well and could put to serviceable use. See Moynihan, *Latin Letters of C.S. Lewis*.

7 *New York Times Sunday Review* (March 22, 2015), 5.

including the Ukraine and Russia. Without continuing to cultivate the language of Cicero, it will be difficult to guarantee access to these records of Europe's shared past to anyone other than a few specialized scholars. Latin will become an arcane discipline like Assyriology. Educated citizens of Europe will have no independent access of their own to a common language and culture without Latin. (Esperanto's promise to fill the linguistic void has proved illusory.)⁸ When such a critical component of a common past is lost, it is hard to imagine how any sort of collective continuity with what has gone before could be preserved. If one thinks it possible to fashion a cultural identity merely by carving out the contours of a blank future without regard to the past, one might indeed safely ignore all of this *Kulturgut*, but there is no reason to believe that the kinds of cultural identities that are constituted by such traditions can readily be constructed *ex nihilo*.

This is one of the questions left unanswered by the European Union, which was able to find for itself a common monetary currency and even a common political structure, but not a common language, a common culture. The lack of such a shared cultural tradition seriously diminishes any collective sense of identity and may even pose threats to national and international security. Latin has long been a vital part of a traditional educational culture in Europe that seeks to establish precisely those qualities of intellect and character that will prepare students for a lifetime of thoughtful citizenship and service to others. What could possibly replace it?

If Cicero's language is languishing in Europe, despite periodic upsurges of interest, the place it has occupied traditionally in American culture can seem even more untenable today. This may be owing in part to what Shields calls the "hegemony" of the Adamic myth, which, of necessity, must exclude everything that is classical from what is truly "American," because it has defined as most "American" precisely that which owes least to the European past. Even those scholars who explicitly acknowledge the presence of the classics in early America, like Bernard Bailyn, have still managed to play down their significance: "The classics of the ancient world are everywhere in the literature of the Revolution," he admits, but then adds (fatally): "they are everywhere illustrative, not determinative, of thought."⁹ The phrase "window dressing" has been used to describe the uses to which many early American authors put the ancient Greeks, as though their influence was mostly superficial and for show.¹⁰

8 See Schor, *Bridge of Words*.

9 Bailyn, *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, 23–26.

10 Richard, *Founders and the Classics*, 2.

One irony about all the attention paid in recent years to the classical tradition in America is that many of these studies have effectively marginalized it—even as they pay attention to it. The scholarly, historical approach to the subject not infrequently validates the notion that the classical tradition was important in America once, but that its “Golden Age” lies far off in the distant past.¹¹ Even if it is acknowledged that there were powerful classical influences at work in America’s early history (say on John Adams), the idea that the classics have played a “determinative” role in shaping the contours of the American self today might strike even the most dedicated classicist as counterintuitive.

If in western Europe Christianity has become increasingly less important, even in former bastions of the faith, with many Lutheran churches functioning today more like museums or concert venues than active places of worship, Christianity can still be said to shape America’s cultural identity, at least to some extent.¹² Various polls have shown that a considerable majority of Americans still identify themselves as Christians and actively practice their faith, most of whom have never studied Latin and may never have heard of Cicero. One of the initials of the acronym WASP refers to Protestantism, but there is none, significantly, that represents the classics.

Neither the classics nor Christianity have shaped America’s cultural identity one to the exclusion of the other, but as in Europe, the contributions of both, in operation with (and even against) each other, could be said to be determinative. As John Shields puts it, it is a mistake to consider either the classical tradition or the Christian legacy separately, apart from one another, in a unitary, “linear fashion.” He suggests another model: “The image of two strands coming together, intertwining and interconnecting so as to accommodate virtually infinite possibilities, more accurately captures the dynamic of Americanness. The metaphor in my mind for this dynamic is the double helix of human DNA.”¹³ Instead of reducing the interplay between Adam and Cicero to an exclusionary “either-or” formula, the student of American cultural history should keep the possibility of “both-and” in mind. It is the same kind of dialectical tension, a

11 William Vance regards the fascination of American artists of the 19th century with Rome as essentially escapist, having little substantial to do with the future of America: “Rome, a city with no future, was antithetical to what America was and (in all ways except the aesthetic) to dreams of what it might become. Rome thus originally had for Americans the attraction of the Other” (Vance, *America’s Rome*, vol. 2, xvi).

12 See Bercovitch, *Puritan Origins of American Self*, on the fundamental role the Puritans played in shaping American identity in both the spiritual and secular realms.

13 Shields, *American Aeneas*, xlv.

balancing act between the admiration of Cicero and his disparagement, which Luther himself maintained, with no apparent special effort.

If the classics in combination with Christianity are as determinative for American identity as DNA, it follows that Americans might very well be unaware of this powerful, unseen force that courses through their cultural veins, as it were. Or, even if aware, they still might concentrate on one of the strands of the helix and completely ignore (or be ignorant of) the other. Indeed, if it is true, as Lewis suggested, that one of the essential characteristics of the Adamic myth is the denial of the claims of the past, it is not at all surprising that this strand of the double helix would be blind to the other strand's importance or even deny its very existence. It would have to. The Adamic myth, one could even say, is fundamentally "amythic" in its aspirations, if by "myth" we mean "a story from the past." It is a forward-looking myth only, a dream of the future that is predisposed against any determinative narrative that would constrain Americans to anything but the briefest of pasts. Adam's whole world is just a little older (five days or so) than he is. Here, one could suppose, is the source of the predictable arguments that are raised ever and again in America against the classics. If it is part of "Americanness" that residents of "the land of the free" should think of themselves as unconstrained by history, it must come almost instinctually to them to reject the limiting claims of the past.

The American charges against the ancient classics are so familiar that their repetition almost takes on a liturgical character. It is said that they inspire immorality. They are, it is claimed, the products of elitist, aristocratic, leisured societies and, therefore, irrelevant in a busy, practical democracy. It is almost as if it is a mark of true Americanness to testify vociferously that the classics are "un-American." Perhaps the classics have to be part of the intertwined genetic legacy of America for no other reason than because they represent the most visible, obvious target for opposition to the past. If they did not exist they would have to be invented, because without the classics, Americans, who, in the words of D.H. Lawrence, "have always been shouting about the things they are not," would have no chance to utter these predictable objections to the Greco-Roman past every generation.¹⁴

14 D.H. Lawrence, *Studies in Classical American Literature*, 3: "Those Pilgrim Fathers and their successors never came here for freedom of worship. What did they set up when they got here? Freedom would you call it? They didn't come for freedom. Or if they did, they sadly went back on themselves. They came largely to get *away*—that most simple of motives 'Henceforth be masterless.' Which is all very well, but it isn't freedom. Rather the reverse. A hopeless sort of constraint. It is never freedom till you find something you

But the classics may represent something more than a convenient target; they may also represent a real yearning for rootedness that is the counterpart to the American desire to be free from all roots. Oft-repeated complaints about how younger generations do not possess nearly as much as they should of what E.D. Hirsch terms “cultural literacy”¹⁵ may tell us as much about the complainers as they do about the objects of the complaints. It may well be that Americans are not altogether content to be pastless. Just as many of Cicero’s Roman contemporaries yearned for a connection with Greece and its distinguished cultural heritage, some Americans, too, yearn to discover their cultural roots—any cultural roots. The past is the key, for many, that unlocks the mystery of who they are and who they are going to be. The blurb for a book by Cullen Murphy with the title *Are We Rome? The Fall of an Empire and the Fate of America* informs the reader that it “examines America at the crossroads and casts much-needed light on where our nation is going and how we might avoid the fate of a fallen empire.” That such a book with such a title could be published in 2007 says a lot about the continued relevance of the ancient Romans for America’s identity.¹⁶

In spite of the repeated predictions of their imminent demise, the classics have not yet quietly left the American cultural scene. In fact, in the last decades they have begun to assume the popular character of so much of the rest of American culture. Who would have guessed that a translation of Dr. Seuss’s *The Cat in the Hat* into Latin would sell thousands of copies? Who would have thought that movies about gladiators and the Trojan War and the battle of Thermopylae would be blockbuster successes in 21st-century America? Some of the most popular computer games feature Rome and choose the ancient world as their venue, such as “Rome: Total War” and “Caesar.” There is even a Latin version of Wikipedia (*Vicipaedia*).

Just when it seemed that Cicero would be subjected to what is undoubtedly the worst fate of all for a man so dedicated to being at the center of political activity—the fate of being ignored—the figure of Cicero has begun to loom larger than might be expected in American popular culture. Already in 1965,

really *positively want to be*. And people in America have always been shouting about the things they are not.”

15 Americans’ ignorance is not limited only to the Greco-Roman past. They appear to be equally unaware of fundamental facts about Christianity. Many would not recognize the names of the first books of the Bible any more readily than they would one of Cicero’s speeches (Prothero, *Religious Literacy*, 30).

16 The political rise of Donald Trump has led to more than one comparison with the precarious situation in Rome at the end of the Republic. See, e.g., Paul Krugman, “How Republics End,” *New York Times*, Dec. 19, 2016, A21.

a novel about Cicero, Taylor Caldwell's *Pillar of Iron*, spent time on the *New York Times* bestseller list. There is now a detective fiction series set in ancient Rome (*Roma sub Rosa*; Steven Saylor), featuring Gordianus, "the finder," who pounds the pavement on behalf of his clients, including Cicero. Most recently, the novels in Robert Harris's "Cicero Trilogy," *Imperium* (2006), *Lustrum* (2009; retitled *Conspirata* for American readers), and *Dictator* (2015) have sold very well in the United States.

Far from being a blank canvas on which cultures from all around the world are free to inscribe themselves, "Americanness" (if there is such a thing) could be seen as an extremely rarefied distillation of European (or Western) culture. Perhaps "America" is the very quintessence of the West. Perhaps it is precisely because they are not "native," but imported, both of them, that Christianity and the classics have assumed such importance for Americans who may, at one and the same time, relish their freedom from history and still crave a connection with a substantial past. One of the things that ensured the continued strengthening of the presence of Christianity in America was the successive waves of European immigrants over the years. Many of them left or were forced to leave Europe because of their strong religious convictions (not only the Puritans, but also Baptists, Quakers, Amish, Mennonites, Methodists, and, as we have seen, Lutherans). Not surprisingly, they not only transplanted their religious beliefs but also their religious fervor. So, it could be said, America became more Christian than Christian Europe. Something of the same sort of phenomenon may also be said to have happened in the field of the classics. Americans like Ernst Sihler went to study in Europe in the nineteenth century and came back with European ideas of what universities should be. Basil Gildersleeve's experience in Berlin and Göttingen in the early 1850s shaped his influential views on how graduate study would proceed at Johns Hopkins.¹⁷

A serious objection that has been raised to the continuation of the study of Cicero and Latin in America assumes that America is supposed to be a melting pot (or better, perhaps, a mixed salad) of cultures from all over the world, not a single monolithic cultural identity that could be described as deriving from only one (or two) sources, both of them inherited from Europe. An increasing number of Americans, of course, are not Christians, nor of Indo-European ancestry, nor speakers of English. Multi-culturalist theory suggests that America includes a little bit of everything, different races, different religions, different

17 Before and after World War II, the arrival on American shores of influential European scholars in exile, as it were, many of them Jewish, played an enormously important role in shaping the intellectual makeup of higher education in America, including the classics. See Calder, "Refugee Scholars in the U.S.," 153–173.

cuisines. School and university curricula today often reflect this pluralistic perspective. The “Great Books,” Plato and Aristotle, Virgil and Cicero, do not occupy a privileged place anymore, no matter how influential they may have been in the past, but now must share space with a widely diverse group of authors and artists and philosophers who represent a myriad of cultures, if they are to survive at all.¹⁸

In truth, such a pluralistic view is focused on an idealized future instead of looking at this issue from a historical perspective and facing present realities squarely. As it projects itself onto the world scene, America is not seen by many of the world’s other citizens as some sort of neutral arbitrator of disputes. It has its own distinctive ideological agenda. Democracy, individualism, capitalism, consumerism, and even multiculturalism are not characteristic values of all cultures in the world by any means. And these essential aspects of Americanism have a long European heritage. In fact, there are many obvious ways in which America cannot even pretend to be multicultural, especially in respect to language. A great many Americans are not multilingual or even bilingual, as so many Europeans and others are. The unofficial language of America is English.

Today the charge most often levelled against the classics and other humanities disciplines represented in the American academy is that none of them are very “useful.” This is one of the greatest challenges facing colleges and universities in the United States today: the necessity to justify the validity of the education they offer students in terms of the useful, that is to say, its practical, economic, and vocational benefits. Questions regarding the utility of a traditional “liberal” education grounded in the humanities were raised, as we have seen, with some urgency already in the early modern period.¹⁹ But these

18 Those who are most deeply committed to passing on to the next generation of Americans “the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome” (to use Edgar Allan Poe’s words), that is to say, professional classicists, are sometimes unable to develop cogent apologetic arguments that can be understood by those outside their discipline. It seems so sensible and correct and self-evident to classicists that one should read the classics that it can be nearly impossible to understand those who are ideologically opposed to their study. The bitter attrition suffered by the classics in recent years in American schools and colleges has created in some instances an understandable degree of pessimism. See, for instance, Culham and Edmunds, *Classics: Discipline and Profession in Crisis?* and Hanson and Heath, *Who Killed Homer?*

19 John Henry Newman posits an inevitable dichotomy between “two methods of education; the one aspires to be philosophical, the other to be mechanical; the one rises toward ideas, the other is exhausted upon what is particular and external” (*Discourse VI: Philosophical Knowledge its own End*, 182).

challenges are even more cogent today given the increasingly high costs of a university education in the United States. Many students are choosing to pursue their educational dreams as “efficiently” as possible; from such a perspective the study of Latin might well be considered an unaffordable luxury. The consequent, understandable temptation for college students, their parents, and, educators at all levels is to discount the importance of the classics and the other humanities, to assign more of the instruction of such coursework at the university to adjunct faculty, and to develop more applied and vocational programs in their stead.

It is arguable how immediately practicable some of these other disciplines actually are, even though their indispensability for the education of young adults is rarely questioned. It may be coincidental, but reading scores have steadily declined in America since Latin was removed from the curriculum in the 1960s, following the general consternation about mathematical and scientific literacy caused by the Soviets’ successful launch of Sputnik. Latin was eliminated, but geometry remained. Which is an intellectual skill that is more likely to prove really useful to most Americans later in life: the ability to determine the radius or circumference of a circle—or to know what words like “radius” and “circumference” really mean and how to use them correctly in a sentence? Many young people benefit from the study of geometry and calculus in high school and college, needless to say, as an invaluable kind of intellectual formation, but without ever using those specific skills again. The same, however, could also be said to be true of the long-term benefits of the study of Latin.²⁰

What about the long and venerable tradition that argues that an education is worth having for its own sake, not just for all the other good things that it provides us? For Aristotle and many others since, education is an end (*telos*) in and of itself for humans and not simply a means to an end. This view of education suggests that it not only prepares young people for success in getting a job but also does much more than that, sustaining the well-educated in all sorts of ways throughout their entire life, in times of employment, job change, unemployment, and retirement. It is not only as “workers” that human beings enrich a community, according to such a perspective, but also insofar as they are enabled to be thoughtful citizens, perform useful public service, and serve as inspirational leaders of others. For educators and educational institutions, it is worth remembering that there are vitally important contributions that the state needs from its educated citizens (e.g., intelligent voting), to which it is not easy to attach a monetary figure.

20 See my discussion in “Bach’s Latin,” 294.

Modern pedagogy in America, for the most part, has been more inclined to reward innovation and promote educational reform than to inculcate a respectful appreciation for the past. The assumption that all learning must be of immediate practical applicability for the future in order to be of value seems to be even more of an unquestioned tenet than it ever was. One suspects that the notion that the goal of education is to prepare students to live their lives fully (and not merely make a living) sounds distinctly quaint to many today. But for those who find “tiresome the present age’s preoccupation with utility, speed, novelty, convenience, efficiency, and specialization,” who refuse “to justify education as a means to wealth ... fame, or self-assertion,” and who desire above all else an educational experience which aims “to educate for wisdom and virtue, not power and vanity,” the study of the classics and other less immediately applicable disciplines may not seem impracticable at all.²¹

There is now a small but growing “classical education movement among denominational Christian educators in America.” Beginning already in 1989 with Douglas Wilson’s “Logos School” in Moscow, Idaho, a modestly impressive number of Christian schools and homeschooling organizations have embraced a curriculum featuring Latin at all levels, focusing on the traditional skills taught in the trivium, often drawing on Dorothy Sayers’s 1947 essay “The Lost Tools of Learning.” Rhetoric, Latin, and Cicero figure prominently in such curricula. Some of the schools, like “Wittenberg Academy,” are Lutheran in orientation.²² Whether “classical Christian education” is a movement that is really “sweeping America” (as the title of one book describing it suggests) remains to be seen, but the amount and degree of interest in the movement suggests that the final chapter on the fruitful and vexed relationship between Cicero and Christianity, however short it may be, may have yet to be written.²³

21 Gamble, *Great Tradition*, xviii. See my review in *IJCT* 16 (2009), 625–628.

22 There is a “Consortium for Classical Lutheran Education” which has a press, hosts an annual conference, and advertises vacant positions (see www.ccle.org).

23 This paragraph depends heavily on Korcok, *Lutheran Education*, 251–254. As of 2010 there were over 200 members in the Association of Classical Christian Schools. On the “sweeping” nature of the movement, see Veith and Kern, *Classical Education: The Movement Sweeping America*. On Sayers and the trivium, see Wilson, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning*; Bluedorn, *Teaching the Trivium*; and Hart, *Increasing Academic Achievement with the Trivium*. See also Crowley and Hawhee, *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*, a popular college textbook in its fifth edition which uses classical rhetorical theory to teach English Composition to freshmen.

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